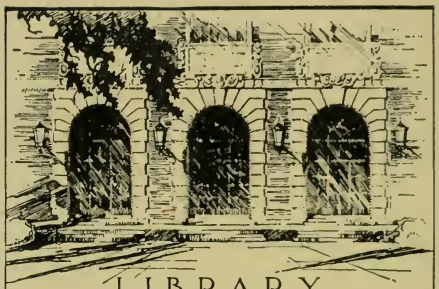
John Waldie

Novels and Romances. } No. 643



LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS

823
P585w
v.3

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2009 with funding from
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

http://www.archive.org/details/whoshallbeheir03pick

WHO SHALL BE HEIR?

BY

MISS ELLEN PICKERING,

AUTHOR OF

"THE PRINCE AND THE PEDLAR," "NAN DARRELL," "THE FRIGHT," "THE QUIET HUSBAND," &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
T. & W. BOONE, 29, NEW BOND STREET.

1840.

T. C. Newby, Printer, Angel Hill, Bury.

823
P585w
v. 3

WHO SHALL BE HEIR?

CHAPTER. I.

"Wyvill bade me apologise for his absence, not being able to return in time for dinner," said Richard Weston as he took his place at Mrs. Denham's table, having returned with his brother and Edred from C. only just in time to dress. "He has many things to settle with his solicitor, he says, and but little space to do it in, as he talks of leaving Denham the day after to-morrow."

"Did Mr. Wyvill desire you to tell me of his intended departure?" enquired his hostess coldly.

"Oh! no; he will name it to you himself; but he received a summons from his father this morning; at least so he says, though I am inclined to think that he is anxious to get out of the country. Poor fellow! he is dreadfully cut up about the trial. We were never great friends, but I cannot help feeling for him now, he takes the thing so much to heart, and yet bears his vexation like a man;—a little proudly or so, but still like a man. I tried to console him by representing that no one cared for what hired counsel said, and that some people still doubted Stebbing and Fisher; but he stopped me short, telling me plainly that he could not endure to converse on the subject, adding that he should never know a moment's peace till he had proved Stebbing and Fisher guilty of perjury, cleared his honor to the world, and discovered the instigator of the conspiracy that

had been at work against him. He looked very oddly at you, Cottrell, I thought, as he said this. Could he suspect you of having any hand it?"

"He looked very oddly at every body I thought. As you say, I never saw a man so cut up; and perhaps he remembered my advising him to compromise the matter, and may regret not having followed my advice. The truth is, my servant overheard his groom speaking of the horse's former lameness, and hence I feared the exposure which took place. Wyvill bears me no good will for my counsel, though kindly meant. You know I always said the horse was sold for more than its worth."

"It may be so; but I doubt that fellow Stebbing after all. To my mind, the whole comes of quarrelling with a man for tying a tin canister on to a curs' tail. I told Wyvill then that it was all nonsense; men tied tin canisters on to curs' tails from the time of our great, great, grandfathers; and will continue to

do so till the time of our great, great grandchildren. I hope you have lost your headache, Rosalind," added Richard, Miss Trevor, as we have said before, being a something new after her late confinement to her room.

"I am sorry to say I have not. There are few things so likely to cause a headache as listening with one's bonnet on in a hot, and crowded court."

"Dear me, well I found it very amusing, and not at all headachy; but you are such a fine lady," observed Miss Bailey superciliously, vexed at Richard's present devotion to Rosalind.

Mr. Richard Weston's pity for Rupert affected neither his spirits nor appetite, and Edred helped him most effectually in his endeavours to amuse the ladies, throwing the Misses Bailey into fits of laughter by his odd, merry sayings, and capital mimicry of judge, jury, and barristers.

"Are you for a stroll this evening, Rosalind?"

asked Edred as she was leaving the dining room. "It will be of service to your headache."

"Rest and solitude will be better than motion and society," answered Rosalind coldly; so most of the party, who were not invalids, sauntered out without her.

As Rosalind passed along the corridor to her own apartment she was struck with the peculiar effect of a gleam of light that fell on the portrait of Sir Marmaduke Denham—the very portrait which Wyvill had said he was sketching when accused of lingering near her door to gather tidings of her health. Time had faded the colours, and this, or the peculiar light, gave it a ghastly look. It seemed to her to bear a resemblance to Wyvill, as she had seen him that morning in court with livid lips, and cheeks of an ashy paleness, wrestling with the pangs that wrung his heart, and shook his frame. This might be fancy; but it chimed in with her present train of thought—quickened her sympathy—and fixed her wavering resolution.

Ten minutes after she was at the door of Mrs. Denham's study asking admission.

"What is the matter?" questioned that lady in great surprise, and some alarm, as the intruder advanced towards her. "What has happened?" she continued in growing wonder, as Rosalind stood before her now pale—now flushed—with a resolute air, but trembling frame.

"Nothing new has happened, Mrs. Denham; but I am come to ask your counsel—your assistance in righting the wronged—in defeating and punishing the guilty," answered Rosalind boldly, the strong excitement of the moment giving her courage to encounter her cold and formal hostess.

"What do you mean, Miss Trevor? Who is guilty? Who is to be righted?"

"I will tell you, my dear madam, trusting that you will excuse this application since there is no one else of whom I can seek advice. Mrs. Sewell is kind—very kind, but she wants judg-

ment—Mr. Adnam is absent; and to reveal what I know, and what I suspect to the person wronged might occasion bloodshed, for he is young and high spirited. You may be able to unravel the plot of which I have fortunately obtained the clue, and bring back peace to a wounded heart, writhing under the imputation of dishonor."

"You speak in riddles, Miss Trevor; explain yourself. I can say nothing till I learn to what plot you allude."

"That you shall learn at once," said Rosalind, and, hurried away by the strength of her own feelings into a forgetfulness of the coldness of her hostess, she related rapidly the scene of the evening before in the dell, adding as she concluded her spirited narrative—"The last witness in court to-day was one of those speakers—the other was Edred Cottrell."

"Are you certain of this? Surely you must be mistaken," observed Mr. Denham, as Rosalind paused to take breath.

"No; I am certain—I could not be mistaken—that man's face, seen as I saw it, could never be forgotten; and his voice was too peculiar not to be recognised."

"But Edred Cottrell—you might have mistaken him:—from your own showing the second person was behind a tree, and you saw nothing of his face, and little of his figure."

"But I heard his voice, and I could speak to that among a thousand."

"One voice may resemble another; but, allowing it to have been Edred Cottrell—what do you infer?—what would you have me infer from his words?"

"Is it not plain? Do you not see at once that to gratify his enmity towards Mr. Wyvill—to disgrace him in the eyes of the world, and render him hateful in yours, he bribed and persuaded Stebbing and Fisher to swear falsely?" exclaimed Rosalind impatiently, Mrs. Denham's coldness and caution being at that moment more than usually irritating from jar-

ring with her own excited, and high wrought feelings.

"I do not arrive at conclusions so hastily, Miss Trevor. To right one person by wronging another shows little wisdom or justice in my opinion;—we must discuss this subject calmly. There are many in this house, who would greatly wonder at your giving evidence against Edred Cottrell, who is supposed to have secured himself a prominent place in your estimation."

"I hope I shall never allow my feelings to overrule my sense of justice, madam," answered Rosalind loftily, though with a glowing cheek.

"I too hope not, Miss Trevor; take care that you are not doing so now," observed Mrs. Denham pointedly and severely.

"You wrong me by the suspicion, madam."

"I trust I do, Miss Trevor; but the world's judgment is not mine. There has been much of late that I do not understand, but this to

me is clear—you are no friend to Edred Cottrell."

Rosalind started, but made no reply; and Mrs. Denham continued.

"You come to me on the plea of righting the wronged;—now I ask you plainly, are you urged to this by a sense of justice, and of justice only? Does no other feeling mingle with this anxiety to clear the innocent?—You do not answer—you turn away. I will be franker—bolder—and put the question still more openly. Does not Rosalind Trevor love Rupert Wyvill?"

Rosalind's whole frame shook, and she clung to a chair for support. She would have rallied—she would have spoken, and spoken proudly too, for she was hurt at the cold, keen question; but the words died on her quivering lips, and she was silent.

"Speak Rosalind Trevor! you will not tell me a falsehood I know."

"No, madam; I will tell you no falsehood," said Rosalind after a lengthened pause, controlling her strong emotion sufficiently to answer, though with a low unsteady voice.

"My feelings on this subject matter not—Rupert Wyvill loves, and is loved by another."

"Poor child!" said Mrs. Denham, passing her arm round her trembling frame, to give her the support which she so much needed.

Could those gentle tones proceed from the cold, the formal, the unfeeling Mrs. Denham? Those tones so full of pity and the heart's warm sympathy? Rosalind looked up amazed and doubtful—she must have been mistaken. No; there was no mistake—large tears were standing in Mrs. Denham's eyes, and a fond mother could not have gazed upon her with more pity. Overcome by this unexpected sympathy, Rosalind's head sank on her shoulder, and for a while she wept without the fear of repulse or rebuke. A few more kind words, and Rosalind had learned to love her as a parent; but Mrs. Denham was

in the habit of concealing and controlling her feelings not giving way to them; and this sudden outbreak of emotion was soon subdued. She was still gentle, still soothing, but no longer affectionate, and Rosalind was too sensitive not to feel the slightest diminution of kindly sympathy.

"I would not pain you by questions, and yet, if I might, I would fain ask one or two," said Mrs. Denham, after seating her young guest on a sofa beside her, and allowing her time to conquer her agitation. Rosalind was silent; and taking her silence for assent Mrs. Denham continued.

"To whom is Rupert Wyvill attached?"

"To a young friend of mine," answered Rosalind promptly, but not steadily.

"The lady he met at Drinkbourne?"

"Yes."

"May I ask her name?"

"Excuse me, Mrs. Denham; this question concerns another, more than myself."

"I will not press it—one more question and I have done. Has he spoken to you of this attachment? Does he know that you are aware of it."

"No, madam; he does not, and must not know it. You have guessed what no other guesses, and to convince you of my honesty of purpose, I have said—admitted to you, what I would not say or admit to another. But my secret is safe with you—will you not promise me this?" questioned Rosalind earnestly whilst burning blushes spread over cheek and brow.

"Quite safe, Rosalind; you may rely on that. In this at least your wishes shall be gratified, however I may differ from your views on other points."

"I do rely on you, Mrs. Denham. If I did not—if I could imagine that you would reveal to others what has been forced from me only by circumstances, and the hope of serving him, I should die with shame. Now that you are satisfied of the purity, the disinterestedness of

my motives, will you not aid me in oversetting the plots of the wicked?"

"We must first decide who the wicked are, before we can do this," answered Mrs. Denham, resuming her former coldness, it might almost be said severity of manner. "You have only suspicions, and it is never safe to act on these. You heard no name; and he and him might refer to another than Rupert Wyvill—the he and him of a young lady are rarely the he and him of experienced men."

"Surely, madam, you cannot doubt that the conversation I overheard referred to the trial of to-day?" exclaimed Rosalind warmly, not a little impatient at her hostess's slowness of decision.

"Indeed I do, Miss Trevor. You being young—of a quick temper, and lively imagination—are apt to jump at conclusions, without ever considering the height, or breadth, or depth of the objections over which you jump; I being older and of a slower temperament—too slow

I see you think--arrive at conclusions by a more dilatory, but safer course. You decide on suspicions—I must have facts to determine me. Without further proof, I cannot—will not believe Edred Cottrell capable of the baseness of which you accuse him."

"Believe me, madam, he is capable of all with which I charge him. Review his conduct for the last six weeks. Is there one of his cousins, myself perhaps latterly excepted, whom he has not sought to render ridiculous or hateful in your eyes? And was it not the same even with me on my first arrival, till I remonstrated boldly?"

"You are judging a rattle without thought, as you would a sober man of business with thought."

"Edred Cottrell never acts without thought; he makes the motly of the fool a cover for the deep laid schemes of the knave. He should be judged from the impressions which his words leave, not from the way in which those impres-

sions are conveyed. Think of his account of the scene in Hester Darley's cottage—his story of the tin canister; and above all, his hints concerning the lady at Drinkbourne;—his pretended reluctance to speak—yet his art in leading the conversation to the point he desired."

"You are carried away by the warmth of your feelings, Miss Trevor, and allow your regard for one to prejudice you against another," observed Mrs. Denham with provoking coldness, as the indignant Rosalind paused in her accusations.

"I speak not from prejudice, madam, do not think it—I am not hurried away by my high estimation of another to charge Edred Cottrell unjustly. We were friends when I came."

"And now are enemies—that is plain;" observed, Mrs. Denham, closing the sentence. "You have espoused the cause of his rival and become a partisan—this is ever the way with

young, warm hearts. Edred Cottrell said no more of the lady at Drinkbourne than Mr. Wyvill admitted to be true, and where there is mystery, there is the appearance at least of evil. Why is not his engagement with your friend avowed?"

"Because her father objects to their union till Mr. Wyvill can settle more on his daughter," answered Rosalind proudly, meeting Mrs. Denham's searching look without shrinking, firm in her own integrity, and hurt that her hostess should suspect her of falsehood, which she imagined from her manner to be the case.

"And you would help him to a fortune," remarked Mrs. Denham in a tone that caused Rosalind's cheek to crimson.

"I would have him held at his real worth, Mrs. Denham. Mr. Wyvill's wealth or poverty can be nothing to me," she replied looking down to conceal the quivering of her lip. "Judge Edred Cottrell from his conduct to others,"—she added recovering her self-pos-

session. "Take the Baileys—the Westons—has he not made each and all appear ridiculous or worse in your presence?"

"Perhaps that might be easily done without any malicious intentions," answered Mrs. Denham with a slight curling of the lip, which was neither a smile, nor a sneer, but between the two.

"You said, madam, when we last conversed together that you had found Michael's letter in the shrubbery. How came it there? My brother placed it within his desk."

"I understand your meaning, Miss Trevor;—but are you not doing the very thing of which you accuse the object of your suspicions? Are you not insinuating guilt, which you cannot prove?"

"I am," said Rosalind frankly, after a minute's consideration, "and yet the conviction is fixed on my mind that the letter was left where you found it by Edred Cottrell."

"It might be as well if you were less hasty

in your conclusions—less rash and obstinate in your convictions. I cannot to satisfy you believe Edred Cottrell guilty of breaking open a a desk, and stealing a letter."

"The desk was not locked," said Rosalind quickly.

"Then it should have been, Miss Trevor; and your brother has no one but himself to blame for my knowledge of his extravagance."

"One thing more, Mrs. Denham, and I leave the decision to yourself. You conversed with Edred Cottrell concerning my brother's debt.—I ask not what were his words—but did you not entertain a less favorable opinion of Michael after that conversation with him than before it?"

"Certainly; it could not be otherwise, since, like yourself, he dared not affirm his belief that that was your brother's only debt; but his replies were brief, and he volunteered no information."

"Ah! madam, I see my endeavours to place

Edred's character in its true light are vain," said Rosalind with a sigh.

"If you expected to rule my conduct according to your partialities, your time has undoubtedly been wasted—I always judge and act for myself, Miss Trevor."

"I wish no other, madam," answered Rosalind colouring. "For myself I can hope no interest in your heart—no influence over your opinions; but I came to seek justice for another, and I fear plead in vain. You do not believe my words—you do not credit my assertions," she added mournfully.

"Not so; I wish you to understand that I will be guided by my own judgment alone on all occasions; but far from accusing you of a misstatement, I believe you have related all things as you saw, or fancied you saw them. I am satisfied of your having reported the conversation in the dell exactly as you heard it; but I cannot draw the same inference from those unconnected sentences; and moreover I

doubt Edred Cottrell's having been one of the speakers."

"Can you really suppose, madam, that I was mistaken on this point? Do I not know his voice too well to leave the possibility of my having been deceived? Instinct alone would lead me right in this matter."

"I do not pretend to understand the power of instinct, Miss Trevor; it may be very great; but I prefer the rule of reason, more especially when instinct is founded on dislike and prejudice. Prove that Edred Cottrell was one of the speakers, and I may begin to think of him as you desire, that is, if he should not be able to account satisfactorily for a meeting with Fisher."

"I can bring no further proof of his presence than my firm conviction, Mrs. Denham."

"Then pardon me, Miss Trevor, if I say that your mere conviction is no testimony against him; whilst I can adduce strong evidence in his favor. You say you left him by the dell

and hastened home, running part of the way; and yet I saw him join you on the lawn before you reached the house. How can you account for this?"

"He must have outstripped me in speed—I was myself startled at the circumstance."

"And yet, though startled at the circumstance, did not allow it to weigh against your suspicions. Is this holding the scales of justice fairly?"

"The way through the dell was the shortest, and I was further delayed by one of the shrubbery gates being locked, which obliged me to turn back some distance; besides, being weakened by my late illness, he could of course outwalk and outrun me."

"I think he told you that he had been in his dressing room writing a letter for me."

"He would tell anything to serve a purpose," answered Rosalind quickly.

"Did he seem confused by your question?—did he hesitate in his reply?"

"Neither. It is rare indeed that his tongue or eye reveals what he wishes to conceal—both have been well tutored."

"You are warm, Miss Trevor—too warm;—a judge should be cool and dispassionate."

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Denham; I am warm—too warm; my spirit rises at the bare thought of treachery or deceit, and I often injure a cause by my indiscreet zeal. I have done so now—I see it plainly by your manner; I have injured Mr. Wyvill when I sought to serve him. Forgive the overwarmth of his injudicious advocate."

"I am not offended at this zeal, Miss Trevor, though perfectly aware that you set me down as cold and unfeeling, because I do not permit my imagination to keep pace with yours; but I am grieved that you should think so ill of Edred Cottrell."

"I cannot alter my opinion of him, madam, till I perceive some reason for the change; and I in my turn have no hope I fear of obtaining

your assistance to unravel the plot against Mr. Wyvill's fame."

"I am incredulous as to the existence of any plot, at least if you persist in making Edred Cottrell a principal actor in it; but I would do any thing in reason to satisfy your doubts. What do you wish done?"

"I know not—I sought advice from you, but your incredulity renders you an inefficient guide on this subject. As a first step I would establish the fact of Edred's having been in the dell."

"That is more than I can effect;—you must ask something possible. You met him on your return perfectly self-possessed, neither hurried nor breathless:—my maid received the letter written at my request from his own hands at his dressing room door; and I heard him descend the stairs, and saw him step out on the lawn to join Mrs. Sewell. You look staggered; but still incredulous. Would you like to cross-examine my maid?"

"No, madam, rather summon Edred himself, and tax him boldly with his baseness," cried Rosalind wrought to desperation by Mrs. Denham's disbelief of her assertions.

"Would that be advisable, Miss Trevor? I only engaged to do any thing in reason. You say that his lips and eyes are too well tutored to reveal what he wishes to conceal, and if he recognised you in the dell and hastened home to baffle your suspicions, as you imagine, will he not be fully prepared for your questions, sudden or searching as they may be? Or were it otherwise, is it desirable that you should appear in this affair?—that you should stir in this matter? Might it not give rise to surmises painful to your delicacy, and galling to your woman's pride? Let your own heart answer this."

"You are right, madam; it would not be advisable—I cannot school my eyes and tongue like Edred Cottrell," answered Rosalind sadly, shading her face with her hand to conceal her

emotion. "And yet it is hard that he must be sacrificed to save me from suspicion," she added, looking up with a glowing cheek. "If I could but excite your pity for his agony—if I could but enlist your sympathy in his behalf, I should be contented; I should feel that I had then done all that I could do, situated as I am. And surely you could not have seen his sufferings with indifference? Surely you could not have looked unmoved on his contracted brow, clenched hand, and ashy cheek? Think what he must have borne!"

"I do think of it. If innocent, he deserves our pity—if guilty, he merits all he bore, and must abide the penalty."

"He is not guilty! he is innocent!" exclaimed Rosalind passionately.

"We will hope so; but circumstances are against him, Miss Trevor; however he shall have the benefit of all reasonable doubts, and I will make enquiries as to the persons you saw in the dell; but, if I engage to do this, you

must in return engage not to mention your suspicions of Edred Cottrell. To name them to Mr. Wyvill would probably occasion a quarrel—perhaps a duel; to name them to others would destroy all chance of discovering the truth, and might injure Edred's character, though that I believe stands too high to be blighted by vague reports."

"And this is all you will do?" said Rosalind sadly.

"It is all that in justice I can do. Let Mr. Wyvill prove his servant perjured, and he will regain his place in my estimation. Is there anything else on which you would consult me?"

"Nothing else, I thank you," said Rosalind, rising with a heavy heart: for she took the question as a hint of dismissal.

"You are worn out with fatigue and emotion," observed Mrs. Denham more kindly as she marked her tottering steps. "What if I issued an express command that, for fear of a

relapse, you should not leave your room again to-night?"

"It would be most thankfully obeyed," answered Rosalind, delighted at being spared the pain of affecting a gaiety she could not feel.

"So let it be then. I will publish my edict, and no one disputes the will of Mrs. Denham of Denham Park," said her hostess with a touch of sarcasm, "unless it is Rosalind Trevor," she added in a different tone.

"Forgive me, madam, if I have seemed bold and over warm; it was a painful subject to speak on, and when the feelings are roused the speech is rarely measured."

"I meant no blame by my words, Miss Trevor. You have endured much to-day, and I would not add to your suffering, though if my wishes could influence you, I should urge a less prejudiced judgment of Edred Cottrell. Good night! May you find rest and peace!"

"Good night! my dear madam. I thank

you for your kind wish, and return it," answered Rosalind as she left the room, touched by the unusual sweetness of her look and tone.

"So Edred Cottrell is to possess this noble mansion!" was her thought as she stood for some moments before the portrait of Sir Marmaduke Denham. "I should not care if any other had it; but that he should win it by falsehood and treachery! The roof that sheltered his gallant ancestors should fall and crush him on the day he stands beneath it as its master. But it is vain to repine—I cannot help it; prosperity is not the test of merit, and remorse may gnaw the heart that beats beneath a jewelled vest. Judge him favorably—no; that I cannot do. He has wronged my brother—he has wronged another—and I can right, can avenge neither. That noble being must be galled and fretted by a hireling's words—stung by the blame of honorable men, and I—I must not even try to soothe his pangs;—that office is not mine!"

A step was heard on the stairs—the step of Edred Cottrell, as her indignant heart proclaimed; and turning abruptly into her room she closed, and locked the door. She was in no humour to be looked upon, and least of all by him. Her face was as pale and ghastly as the faded face of that ancient warrior, and passion had left its stormy traces on her features. Save Mrs. Denham's maid with a cup of tea, no one intruded on her solitude, thanks to that lady's positive command; but there was no rest—no peace for mind or body. She sat at the window leaning her aching brow upon her hand, listening to the sighing of the breeze among the branches of the ancient cedars that adorned the lawn. She heard step after step pass along the corridor as the guests retired to their rooms—then the tramp of a single horse came on her ear, and she knew that the rider was Rupert Wyvill—and she fancied that the speed to which the animal was urged, showed his rider's restless, unhappy mood.

After that came a slow, dull step along the gallery—it stopped before the portrait, and she saw the gleaming of a light beneath her door. She scarcely breathed till the slow, dull step passed on, and the light no longer streamed across the floor. Then her breathing came thick, and short, like broken sobs, as she remembered that Rupert had lauded the noble deeds of Sir Marmaduke, and laughingly protested that he should take him for his model. She had caught a deep, deep sigh as he passed on to his room; and she understood the feelings that had compelled that sigh. The brand of dishonor was upon him—and he felt it.

"What will she who loves him feel when she hears of this? Poor Susan! No, not poor Susan! happy Susan! she may be envied still; —she may console, may comfort him—whilst I—" The sentence remained unfinished.

CHAPTER II.

It was late when Rosalind entered the breakfast room on the succeeding morning. There was a brilliant bloom on her cheek; and as no one had seen her before, so no one could tell that this bloom had come as she placed her hand on the lock of the door. Nearly all the guests were assembled; and the first thing she heard was Rupert explaining the necessity for his departure on the morrow to Mrs. Denham, who heard him to the end, then answered that she would not seek to detain him as his presence was needed elsewhere."

"Wyvill has lost his chance—so much the better for me," thought Richard Weston.

Mrs. Denham's manner was little less cold when she asked after Miss Trevor's headache, whilst Edred Cottrell's anxiety on the subject should, in the opinion of Miss Bailey, have reconciled her to a thousand headaches.

Rosalind's answers to his anxious queries were brief and careless; and availing herself of Mrs. Sewell's advice not to sit with her face to the light, lest it should cause a return of the malady, she passed round to the other side of the table, and took a seat by Rupert. She said little during breakfast, but when addressing her still more silent neighbour, there was a softness in her tone peculiarly soothing to his wounded spirit.

"It is a pity to lose such a fine day. Are you strong enough now for Balder Cliffs?" asked Richard Weston, who appeared to have an especial fancy for this ramble.

"Quite strong enough; and, as you say, it would be doing little honor to this bright sunshine not to go forth and bask in it," answered Rosalind with the show at least of gaiety.

"Well then, suppose we set off in half an hour, and take our luncheon with Farmer Turnbull. We can send over some things, and the farmer's good dame will supply us with fresh cream, eggs and butter. Let me see—how many shall we be?" he continued beginning to count.

"You must excuse me," said Wyvill when the teller came to him.

"No, no; no excuse, you must positively be one of our company," replied Richard Weston, who always held that the more the merrier, and whose enmity had all departed with the conviction that Rupert was completely out of Mrs. Denham's good books, as he expressed it, "We cannot do without him—can we Rosalind? Tell him so—lay your commands upon him."

"You will go—will you not? To-morrow you leave us," said Rosalind with a still brighter blush, and a timid earnestness that was irresistible.

Rupert bowed his acquiescence—he dared not trust himself to speak. Of all in that house, she alone had shown him sympathy, she who in former days had made him the target whereat to aim the arrows of her keen or playful wit, was now all soothing gentleness; she saw how much he suffered, and she pitied him. Yes it was only pity—that he understood; but he was grateful for that—it was a pity mingled with respect and admiration.

"You and Anne had better take my pony chaise part of the way; the walk to Farmer Turnbull's and back will be too much for you both," said Mrs. Denham, addressing Rosalind. The offer was thankfully accepted, and the elder portion of the guests having declined being of the party, the young people started

without them, all in high spirits assumed—or unassumed.

"Do not let the late invalids risk a relapse by doing too much—I commit them to your care, Edred," said Mrs. Denham, as he was assisting Rosalind into the pony chair.

"You commit them to me as being the most sober and thoughtful of the party, I conclude, my dear Mrs. Denham. A thousand thanks for your good opinion," replied Edred gaily, but evidently highly gratified by her words;—it was the first time she had addressed him as Edred. "Depend on my proving by my conduct the wisdom of your selection," he added with a respectful warmth that was well calculated to please his hostess. "Be quiet and obedient cousins Rosalind and Anne, for you are under my control remember."

"I submit to no one's control," exclaimed Rosalind with a mingling of pride, vexation, and mischief, making the pony start off with a touch

of the whip as she spoke. She read in Mrs. Denham's words an intimation that Edred was her favorite, and should be her heir, let what would be advanced against him; and she saw too that Edred, presuming on his dignity, had put aside Wyvill, on whose arm she had rested in preference whilst getting into the little carriage.

None of these things were pleasing to Rosalind, and she determined to show that she had a will of her own, and would exert it; but a woman's determination must in most instances yield to that of a man, and do what she would —let the pony go fast or slow, still Edred kept pace with the little carriage, resolved, as it seemed, to be very good tempered, very attentive, and very agreeable. Terry Weston kept his place on the other side, whilst Richard, consigning the beautiful Maria to the care of Wyvill, so that he could not without positive rudeness decline being her cavalier, appropriated Miss Bailey to himself, leaving her

younger sister to be beaued by the son of a neighbouring squire.

"Shall we take the road at the top, or the bottom of the cliffs?" asked Richard Weston, turning round to consult those behind, as he reached the point where the paths diverged.

"The top going, whilst we are fresh and able to encounter fatigue," answered Edred, and no one dissenting so it was arranged.

Rosalind and Anne got out to walk, and the little carriage was given up to the care of the boy, who had followed for that purpose.

The ascent was steep; but after some panting, puffing, and a great deal of laughing, the summit was gained, and all stopped to take breath and admire. At the foot of the cliffs, in some places exceeding a hundred feet in height, ran a rapid river of unequal depth—now murmuring in the shallow parts over bright pebbles, every stone perceptible through the clear water—now dimpling in its deeper portions, forming mimic whirlpools, its oppo-

site bank fringed with bending willows that dipped their flexile boughs into the crystal stream, whilst beyond spread a level meadow of the richest green, on which were grazing some remarkably fine cattle.

The face of the cliffs, composed of a light clay interspersed with fragments of rock, jutting out in picturesque forms, was adorned with brakes of hazel, thorn, and maple, over which occasionally towered a sturdy oak, or graceful birch, turning up its silver leaves that rustled in the light summer breeze, whilst innumerable wild flowers of various hues and forms peeped out from beneath the shading bushes, or crested some projected mass of stone, flinging their light tendrils down across its weather-beaten front, like a child throwing its young arms round the neck of its toil worn parents, pressing its laughing, joyous face against the wrinkled cheek of age. A bold reach of the river to the right leant additional beauty to the scene, whilst far out, along the

summit, stretched a wide extent of undulating pasture ground, on which were grouped waggons and merry haymakers employed in taking in the late and scanty crop. But though the front of the cliff was in some parts thickly tufted with brakes and patches of brushwood, there were some spots where it descended almost perpendicularly to the water's edge, with no other clothing than long grass, or fern; or fell more gradually in irregular stages of loose earth and stones, that showed strong symptoms of frequent land-slips, the effect of springs coming down from the higher ground.

It was just above one of these said land-slips that the young party stood to admire the sparkling river below, and the sunny mead beyond. With an eye that loved to dwell on the beauty of nature, and a heart that drank in its loveliness as the thirsting traveller drinks in the refreshing element, Rosalind, fearless of danger, bent over the edge of the cliff to gaze into the stream beneath, or mark the

flowers that grew upon its brink, with Anne standing beside her, as was her custom whenever practicable.

It was impossible not to be struck with the rich and varied prospect, but Miss Bailey, being more of a romp and flirt than painter or poet, was soon weary of such a passive employment as gazing, and challenged Edred Cottrell to turn over the hay with her, offering to bet a silver penny that she should prove the most expert and expeditious haymaker, and appointing Wyvill and Richard Weston umpires, thus compelling the attention of three at least of the attending gentlemen.

Selecting two prongs from a heap lying near, the amateur haymakers took their stations; and at the given signal the match began and proceeded amid such bursts of laughter from the performers, and some of the spectators, especially Richard and Jemima, that even Rosalind was lured to turn away from the dimpling river, to gaze upon the competitors, who sought for

victory as if the empire of the world, not a silver penny, were to be the prize. She was still looking at the rivals when she felt herself suddenly grasped by Anne, who, having lost her footing whilst stooping to gather a flower growing just below the edge of the cliff, had caught at her cousin's dress to save herself from falling down the dangerous steep, and the effort of the terrified girl—the effect of instinct—delayed her own descent for a moment, but the ground giving way beneath her desperate struggle to regain a firmer footing, Rosalind became involved in the danger, and was dragged over the brow of the cliff and down its loose and slippery front, the nature of the soil and the steepness of the slope, affording little hope of obtaining that firmer footing even had she had presence of mind enough to seek the only chance of escape.

Anne's scream of terror was half drowned by the mirth of the merry haymakers and their abettors; but it reached the ear of Rupert Wyvill, who

turned to learn its cause. No Rosalind was to be seen. With three bounds he was at the edge of the cliff, whence a scene met his view that blanched his cheek, and stayed for a moment the wild beating of his heart. At the verge of a steep slope, some thirty feet down stood, or rather crouched Rosalind Trevor with a face of ghastly paleness, one foot placed as firmly as she could place it upwards, whilst the other was slipping lower and lower every instant, one hand grasping a tuft of grass, the other supporting the half fainting and terrified Anne, whose weight was bearing both to destruction. A little below, and the cliff descended abruptly to the river, which here flowed over rugged stones. The fall at this spot was full seventy feet.

Rosalind was within a yard of the edge—the ground on which her lower foot was placed was giving way—the one above could scarcely maintain its precarious hold in the loose soil, rendered slippery by the constant welling of a little spring

the—tuft of grass she clutched with the convulsive grasp of fear was yielding to her touch, and the earth was cracking a short space higher up the cliff. To struggle would be only to increase her danger—to hasten her destruction—death was behind, before, around her. She saw her peril—felt that her strength was failing, and that she could not much longer support her helpless companion, but too generous to abandon her to her fate, she still held her up though aware that by so doing she lessened her own chance of escape.

Wyvill's eagle eye took in all this at a glance whilst his quickness of perception and combination enabled him to take the most prompt and judicious measures for rescuing his cousins from their dangerous position.

"Courage! struggle not!—stir not!—I will save, or perish with you," he exclaimed rushing back from the brow of the cliff with still more frantic haste than he had sought it.

Rosalind looked up at his cheering words,

and a gleam of hope lightened her growing despair. The passionate tones in which they were uttered left no doubt of his zeal; and she would not question his power.

Maria's screams at her sister's peril called the rest of the party to the scene of action.

"Stand back! if you would not bring certain destruction on her and yourself. Do you not see that the chasm is opening wider?" exclaimed Rupert Wyvill, returning almost ere Rosalind had missed him, pushing Edred aside as he spoke, who, half maddened at the sight of his cousin's risk, was on the point of leaping down from the brow of the cliff on the crumbling, slippery slope—an act which would have ensured the destruction of all.

The tone was so commanding, that the order to stand back was involuntarily obeyed on the instant, and a moment's consideration told Edred the wisdom of the warning; but his teeth gnashed with rage, and his eye flashed fire as he saw Wyvill descending cautiously,

yet swiftly at a firmer part of the slope, with the aid of two prongs, with which he had provided himself from the field above.

"Saved by him!" muttered Edred; but no one heard him, or the hearer might have speculated whether he would not have preferred his cousin's death to her preservation by Wyvill.

Rosalind's peril was imminent; but the hope, the certainty of succour gave her courage and endurance, though she shuddered as she marked the chasm above her spreading wider and wider; and felt the ground beneath her slipping faster, and faster.

By keeping to the edge of the slip where the ground was firmer, from being connected by the roots of the long grass and brushwood which formed on that side an impassable barrier, and striking in the prongs step before step, so as to secure his footing, Rupert descended in safety to within a few feet of the trembling Rosalind; but here he paused, for the addition

of his weight would probably detach the spot of earth on which she stood from the main cliff, and precipitate all into the stony river beneath. His cheering words had given courage to Rosalind, but Anne was still leaning upon her helpless—hopeless.

Fixing the prongs firmly in the ground, as nearly above the chasm as he dared, choosing himself a steady footing, and holding with one hand on to the handle of the imbedded prong, whilst he stretched the other to Rosalind, he gave her directions how best to avail herself of his aid, for a nearer approach was too dangerous to be attempted, and her preservation must in part depend on her own lightness of tread, and self-possession.

"Save Anne first," said Rosalind.

"No, no; you first. Do not pause—the danger is imminent: I will do what I can for her afterwards."

"I cannot leave her to perish, and she would sink without my arm," answered Rosalind

resolutely, yet trembling with fear as she spoke. "She is clinging to me even now for aid—I will not desert her."

"But time is precious, and she cannot help herself. Only let me see you safe, and I will risk my life again for her. Pause not I implore you! the earth is slipping from under you—a moment's delay may be death to all," exclaimed Rupert passionately, half frantic at the peril of her he came to save.

"Run no risk for me," said Rosalind hurriedly. "Leave me to my fate."

"Never! if you die—I perish with you."

Rosalind looked up at his words—their eyes met—her danger was forgotten—her heart beat wildly, but not with fear; and the blood rushed up into her ashy cheek.

What feeling could have power so to move her whilst death was hanging over her?—one feeling—only one;—for a single moment she was happy.

"Good heavens! we are wasting time. Give

me your hand I entreat you," cried Rupert alarmed at this dangerous delay.

"Rouse yourself, Anne! Your life—the lives of others depend on your exerting yourself," said Rosalind to her young cousin.

Anne, unclosing her eyes at the appeal, gazed wildly round, shuddering with fear as she marked her perilous position.

"Now give your hand, and spring up beside him," continued Rosalind, pointing towards Wyvill.

Terror for once supplied the place of presence of mind. Anne saw the abyss that yawned beneath her, and in a panic of fear, grasping Rupert's hand, made a desperate spring, and aided by his strong grasp gained a footing beside him—but that was all she could effect; her head grew giddy—her senses failed, and she sank at his feet in a fainting fit.

The desperate spring of the terrified girl had so loosened the mass of falling earth as to render Rosalind's situation critical in the extreme.

The tuft of grass gave way from the force of her convulsive grasp, and the whole of the soil from the upper chasm, including the spot on which Rosalind stood, to the crest of the slope, shook, tottered, separated with a whirring, rushing sound, and fell into the river beneath.

A cry of woe and fear arose from the females bending over the cliff above, as they heard the heavy splash in the water, whilst an exclamation of horror and despair burst forth from Edred Cottrell.

"It is all over!" exclaimed Richard Weston, with a deep drawn breath almost amounting to a groan, for even he was deeply shocked.

The mass of earth on which Rosalind stood had fallen—but she had not fallen with it. Rupert's arm had been again stretched out to save her; and his powerful grasp, and her own light spring had placed her in safety by his side; and when the cloud of dust arising from the falling earth had cleared away, she was

seen supported by her preserver, whilst the still insensible Anne was lying at their feet.

"Thank heaven! you are saved," exclaimed the agitated Rupert, twining his arm round her slender waist, to draw her further back from the edge of the precipice.

"I owe my life to you," faltered the trembling Rosalind, shuddering at the thought of the dreadful death she had so narrowly escaped. She had uttered no cry—she had shed no tear whilst her own safety and Anne's had rested so much on her self-command; but now that the danger was past, her high wrought resolution yielded, and with a choking sob her head sank no her preserver's shoulder. She would have poured forth thanks to him and to her God, but speech was for a time denied her—broken words were all she uttered. Those broken words were enough to convince Rupert of her gratitude; and his tender care and touching tones soothed her into comparative calmness.

A murmur of joyful surprise broke from the

UNIVERSITY OF

group above, when they ascertained the safety of those beneath; but Edred's brow grew more and more contracted, and his eyes kindled into a fiercer blaze, as he saw Wyvill supporting the still trembling, sobbing Rosalind, who seemed to rest on him as if his arm could shield her from all evil.

"Do not keep Rosalind down there among the damp grass, and so near the precipice," called Edred from above in a voice which, despite his tutoring, told his wrath. "You would be better employed in aiding her to ascend to her friends, than in detaining her at the brink of an abyss till her thanks have been sufficiently rapturous to satisfy the most extravagant expectations."

"There are some things sooner said than done. My cousin Rosalind, faint from her late alarm, needs a few minutes rest and support, and a glance at the cliff will show the impossibility of her ascending without the aid of a rope, which can be procured from the waggon

I doubt not," replied Rupert calmly, though his eye gave back flash for flash.

His look—his tone—his use of the word cousin, which he had never applied to her before and seemed now to employ to excuse her accepting his support, together with the remembrances of some of his expressions whilst soothing her agitation, and Edred's remark, overwhelmed poor Rosalind with confusion, causing her to burst from his support with a sudden movement that would have again endangered her safety, had not Rupert caught her dress.

"One step higher, and you will have a firmer standing-place upon this jutting stone; and can hold by this hazel bough, since you despise and reject my aid," said Rupert, assisting her to take this step as he concluded.

"Not despise—not reject;—I am grateful, most grateful," faltered Rosalind, grieved at his piqued tone. "But in my fear and agitation I leant too heavily upon you," she added after a

moment's pause with a crimson blush." I am stronger now."

"And like the restored cripple, fling away as worthless the crutch on which you lately leant," he observed reproachfully.

"Do not think me ungrateful," pleaded Rosalind, raising her tearful eyes to his.

"I will think you all you would have me think you—I will believe you all gratitude—all gentleness—all perfection. Forgive me if I caused those tears," exclaimed Rupert Wyvill in an impassioned tone.

Rosalind shook in every limb. There was more in the look and voice than even in the words—her heart beat wildly—a thrill of timid joy shot through her frame—then the chill of remorse succeeded, and she shuddered at her own bright hopes. What was she doing? Stealing away with her silver tones and grateful thanks the heart that had been given, and should prove true to her confiding friend. She

turned abruptly away with a sickening feel of guilt, and Rupert supposing his ardour had displeased her, spoke no more.

A glance at the state of the cliff, as Wyvill had said, convinced Edred of the necessity of procuring a rope to aid the ascent of those below. From the shock occasioned by the fall of so large a portion of soil, the whole ground above, till within a few feet of the summit, was yawning with cracks, besides being so slippery and precipitate as to render a passage across it from the projecting piece of rock on which they now stood impracticable for Rosalind and Anne, whilst the stone itself on which Wyvill had succeeded in placing them, was of such small dimensions, and so slightly imbedded, that he was as anxious for the arrival of the rope as Edred himself, fearing lest even that spot should become unsafe from the pressure of their weight.

The rope was brought, and with it came the haymakers running from all directions to ascer-

tain the cause and extent of the accident, so there was no scarcity of strong arms to draw it up.

Again would Rupert have first provided for Rosalind's safety, but again did she insist on Anne's being succoured before herself. The poor girl was still insensible, a circumstance not to be regretted since it saved her from further terror.

"Ever high minded—ever unselfish;—that man will be blest indeed who wins your love," said Rupert, as in compliance with her wishes he fastened the rope securely round her fainting cousin. Again did Rosalind turn away, as Wyvill imagined in displeasure, and nothing further passed between them, save needful questions and directions as to the fixing and guiding the rope.

A few minutes more and Rosalind was standing in perfect safety, surrounded by her cousins, who crowded round her to express their doubts, and fears, and congratulations; and these

were so oddly intermingled that she found some difficulty in returning suitable replies, Edred's "Thank Heaven, you are safe," was to the full as earnest and impassioned as had been Wyvill's.

The rope was let down to draw up Rupert, and Edred lent his strength as before, taking his former station next the edge. The rope was firmly fastened round Wyvill's waist, and the signal for hoisting up was given, when Rosalind stepping forward placed her hand on the arm of Edred, whose countenance she had been anxiously watching for the last few minutes.

"You are agitated—stirred by some strong emotion: your hand shakes—let another draw up the rope," she said abruptly; and so commanding were air and tone that for a second time that day did Edred involuntarily yield obedience to a peremptory mandate.

He turned aside, but Rosalind alone marked his look as he did so—she alone saw the work-

ing of those pallid lips, and the strange light in those glaring eyes.

A strong man stepped forward to take his place, and Rupert stood beside those whom he had saved.

Rosalind watched his ascent till his foot was on the brow of the cliff; and then all her attention was turned to Anne, who was slowly recovering sense and feeling.

"I have sent after the pony chaise and you had better return immediately," said Edred, resuming, what Richard called, his office of comptroller of the household.

Rosalind made no objection, but taking Terry Weston's arm walked to the foot of the hill, whilst the still languid Anne was supported by Wyvill and Richard.

Declaring herself to be quite recovered from her late alarm, Rosalind tried to persuade her cousins to proceed on their purposed expedition, and leave her and Anne to return by

themselves, but no one would hear of this, so the whole party retraced their way pretty much in the same order as when they started, but not in the same high spirits, real or assumed. The mirth of all was checked by the late accident—Rosalind and Anne scarcely spoke—Edred said little, and Rupert confined his conversation with Maria to a few kind words in answer to her thanks for his having saved her sister, and a detail of her own overpowering fears.

"Back so soon. Why how comes this?" asked Mrs. Denham whom they encountered near the house, giving some directions to her woodman.

"Oh! Rosalind and Anne fell down the cliff—Wyvill, Don Quixote like, rushed after them; so we were all frightened, and obliged to draw them up with ropes," answered Edred lightly.

"Enough to frighten the strongest minded too, Cottrell. It was an ugly fix, as the Ame-

ricans say; and if Wyvill had not played the Quixote it would have been all over with poor Rose and Nan," observed Richard Weston, who with all his vulgarity and selfishness, occasionally showed some better feelings.

"Yes, a very frightful accident—a very romantic adventure; but I spoke lightly of it not to alarm Mrs. Denham," said Edred in an altered tone. "Wyvill can climb like a cat—up or down all the same to him, and he was so greedy of renown that he would undertake the enterprise alone, terrifying others from offering their assistance, by assertions that from the nature of the soil, the descent of a second would endanger all."

"Anne and I owe our lives to Mr. Wyvill," observed Rosalind, but not with her usual independent frankness:—her voice was low and unsteady, and her hands and eyes employed in arranging her shawl as she spoke.

"That you do, Rosalind; and I at least am grateful for his saving poor Nance," said

Richard, whose enmity from a jealousy of his growing favor with his hostess was now turning towards Edred.

"Where is Mr. Wyvill?" asked Mrs. Denham.

"He is talking with a gentleman—his solicitor I think he said—about the trial," replied Maria, coming up at the instant.

"No one was hurt, I suppose, judging from your answers," remarked Mrs. Denham.

"Not exactly hurt, save a bruise and a scratch or so; but poor Nance has been in a faint and fright ever since, and Rosalind looks more dead than alive. She would play ghost in a charade to the life now; and yet she was very courageous whilst in danger—as bold as a lion—as nimble as a fawn. You are a fine noble girl, Rosalind, for keeping hold of Nance and insisting on her being saved first. Wyvill told me all about it; and I will never call you a slang name again—if I can help it," said

Richard. "I will tell you how it all came about, my dear Mrs. Denham."

"Wait a few minutes, till I have sent Anne and Rosalind off to their rooms, for you are right in saying that they look like ghosts. I shall insist on their keeping quiet all day, and not being disturbed by question or condolence," replied Mrs. Denham.

"What has happened? Is any thing the matter?" asked Mrs. Sewell eagerly, coming to the hall-door to enquire, having seen the returning party from her window. "What makes you look so white, Rosalind? Are you hurt?"

"No: only frightened, Richard will tell you all about it, whilst the girls go to their rooms," said Mrs. Denham a little impatiently.

"My dearest child, do lean on me. What has happened? again enquired Mrs. Sewell in a grand fuss. "Did a bull run after you? Ay, I daresay that was it. It is a singular coinci-

dence, but the last time I walked to Balder Cliffs we met several men running as fast as they could with sticks and pitchforks in their hands, who told us that they were after a mad dog, which had bitten two children, a cat, and a pig. Did it knock you down? did it trample on you? did it toss you?" continued the kind, fussy old lady.

"No, indeed, dear Mrs. Sewell, I met neither bull, nor mad-dog," continued Rosalind, trying to repress a smile at the singular coincidence.

"Oh! then the pony ran away with you. I thought it would, for it pricked up its ears before it set off. But you should have taken care of Rosalind, Mr. Cottrell, Mrs. Denham consigned her to your charge."

"Rosalind refused to submit to my control."

"Ah! that is just the way with her—she likes to think and act for herself, and cannot bear to give trouble to any one. It is a singular coincidence—"

"My dear Mrs. Sewell, you must let me lead off Rosalind to her room; Richard will tell you all the particulars of the accident," interposed Mrs. Denham with a manner that admitted of no dispute.

"Are you certain that you have received no injury?" asked Mrs. Denham as she placed Rosalind in a chair in her room.

"Nothing more than a slight bruise or two."

"Then it is only the remembrance of your danger that causes you to look so pallid, and shake like an aspen."

"It was a fearful moment, when I felt the earth slipping from under me," said Rosalind with a shudder, answering evasively.

"And Mr. Wyvill saved you, I think Richard said."

"Yes, I owe him, under Heaven, my life," replied Rosalind speaking earnestly, and no longer subject to the charge of paleness.

An indescribable sound, neither a sigh, nor a psha, and of which no combination of letters

would show the exact pronunciation—an unwriteable interjection of vexation was all Mrs. Denham's comment on this reply.

"Your pulse is very irregular, and you are much agitated; I shall give you a composing draught, and send you to bed till dinner time at least," said Mrs. Denham, releasing the hand she had taken.

Rosalind sighed, but offered no opposition; and Mrs. Denham, after insisting on her lying down, left her with a kind wish that she would be better by six, promising that she should be left quite alone till then, and thus saved from kind Mrs. Sewell's singular coincidences.

"She is vexed that he should save me—and I should be vexed too; and yet life is doubly precious since under providence his gift," thought Rosalind as she lay on her bed thinking over the events of the day. "It might have been better if he had not saved me. There is danger in gratitude—yet what so blessed! so beautiful! But I must be cold and

scanty in expressing that gratitude," she added with a conscious blush.

Mrs. Denham proved herself a skilful compounder of composing draughts; Rosalind's agitation gradually subsided—the restlessness of fever left her, and worn by the need of sleep, for she had never closed her eyes on the preceding night, she sank into a refreshing slumber from which she was awakened by Mrs. Sewell's knocking at her door about half an hour before dinner.

"Oh! Rosalind, my dear, what a dreadful accident! What a horrible situation to have been in, hanging over the river with nothing to cling to but a patch of grass, and holding Anne besides. It turned me quite faint to hear of it; and I am sure I shall love Mr. Wyvill evermore for saving you so cleverly, though to be sure, as Edred Cottrell says, he ran no risk himself in so doing, and any one else could have done the same, only Mr. Wyvill always tries to take the lead in every thing, as if he

were the King of the Catti. But how are you now, dear child?"

"Quite well, and ready to dress," said Rosalind springing up.

"Indeed, I think you had better remain where you are; I do not like that scarlet spot in the centre of your cheek, and your eyes are looking too bright—I can scarcely meet them without shrinking. You were not thus when I first came in, and had much better not get up."

"Oh! yes but I must, dear Minny: you know I never liked lying in bed."

"I agree with Mrs. Sewell, that you are much better where you are," said Mrs. Denham, who, entering unperceived, had overheard the preceding conversation.

The scarlet spot on Rosalind's cheek spread wider and wider at the words, and what she fancied pointed manner of her hostess.

"I should advise your not coming down this evening; and there would be little to amuse

you if you did," continued Mrs. Denham in the same tone, "for the spirits of the whole party appear subdued by the morning's fright. Edred Cottrell is silent and stupid; and Mr. Wyvill is gone."

"Gone!" repeated Rosalind staring wildly at the speaker. "And I have not thanked him as I should."

"Called away on business some hours earlier than he expected," said Mrs. Denham, taking no notice of Rosalind's hurried exclamation.

"And never trouble yourself about thanking him, Rosa dear, I thanked him quite enough for you and me too—did not I Mrs. Denham?" asked Mrs. Sewell.

"More than enough," replied that lady drily. "You had better follow our advice and remain where you are to-day."

"Yes that you had," chimed in Mrs. Sewell. "The fever flush is all gone, and you are fainting now; you cannot even bear the sitting up a minute. Dear, dear me!" she continued in

great alarm, and a greater fuss, for it was one of Mrs. Sewell's peculiarities that the excess of her kindness prevented her being of essential service to those she pitied.

Mrs. Denham instead of uttering lamentations handed Rosalind a glass of water, which was thankfully taken.

"Settle yourself quietly in bed—I will send you another composing draught, and I have no doubt, with your strength of mind and constitution, that you will be able to meet us at breakfast to-morrow free from all agitation," remarked Mrs. Denham, on seeing that the fainting girl was rapidly recovering.

"No doubt of that; but I would be quite alone now," said Rosalind earnestly, with a pleading glance towards her formal yet judicious hostess.

"Right; you must be quite alone, or my draught will fail to compose you; and I will give strict injunctions that no reference shall be made to your late accident when you rejoin

our party. You have suffered much, but these painful feelings will wear off I trust in a few days."

"I trust they will," answered Rosalind, but she did not speak hopefully.

"I will sit with you, Rosa dear."

"No, no, Mrs. Sewell; my patient must be quite alone—come with me."

Mrs. Sewell pleaded, but in vain, and after kissing her young favorite departed.

"You must exert all your firmness; there are prying eyes around and ready tongues—I would save you if possible from suspicions that would shock your delicacy;—man mocks at woman's hopeless love. This is a hard trial, and I should not speak as I do to another, but you are no mere weeping, love-sick girl," said Mrs. Denham, on returning with the draught. "Be firm—control—command yourself."

"I will endeavour," answered Rosalind with a deep sigh, "I have not yet recovered from my fright—I shall be stronger to-morrow—

calm—proud—firm"—she added bitterly, hurt by Mrs. Denham's words and demeanour, which though judicious if meant to repress all emotion in her hearer were not calculated to win affection or confidence.

"May it prove so! Good night. God bless you!" said Mrs. Denham, stooping down and imprinting a kiss on her cold, clammy brow, leaving the room before she could reply.

Had not the voice faltered as she bade—God bless her? Was there no tear on the sufferer's brow?

"I cannot comprehend her," said Rosalind to herself; and then her thoughts turned towards another.

He was gone—and she had not thanked him. He must think her cold, unfeeling. They might never meet again; and Rosalind wrung her hands in grief. Then came the thought that it was better that it should be so. It was evident that he cared not for her, or he would

have walked beside her on their return from the cliff.

Mrs. Denham's injunctions were obeyed by all. Rosalind entered the breakfast room on the morrow with a self-possession that satisfied even her hostess, and no reference was made by any to the accident of the preceding day. Anne too suffered no relapse, and the health of both showed evident amendment hour by hour.

All things went on as they had done before, at least so it appeared to the superficial observer; and yet the guests at Denham Park began to find the family party far more dull than they had done at first. Some attributed this to the departure of Michael and Wyvill, whilst some asserted that neither Rosalind nor Edred were in as high spirits as on their arrival; both had bursts of gaiety, but it was no longer a steady flow of cheerfulness; whilst the Baileys and Westons began to grow

weary of each other, and poor Mrs. Sewell became very fidgety and a little cross at the marks of favor bestowed on Edred by his hostess, and Rosalind's refusal to play her cards so as to cut him out, which she might easily have done, according to her aged friend, who discovered a thousand singular coincidences in this girlish obstinacy, and impolitic independence.

Mrs. Denham alone seemed unchanged—unchangeable; showing equal formality, and equal politeness to all, save Edred, to whom she vouchsafed a greater cordiality. In accordance with her injunctions to others she never once referred to the past, even when accidentally alone with her young guest; and Rosalind, chilled by her reserve, rather avoided than sought her society.

CHAPTER III.

"How studious you have become of late! Always alone in the library," said Edred approaching Rosalind, who was seated near one of the windows. "Which of the sciences are you studying? Can I assist you?"

"I thought your talents lay rather among the arts," she replied with significance, having been provoked by some late insinuations against Michael and Rupert—insinuations so skilfully conveyed as to appear to some of his more simple hearers as intended praise.

"I might make the same retort," he ob-

served, pointing to the book of prints that lay beside her.

"A retort being used in chemistry belongs rather to the sciences," she observed without looking up.

"I should consider it as a part of the art of tormenting."

"You are brilliant to-day, cousin Edred."

"I should prefer being the cause of brilliancy in you."

"Very gallant, but unhappily I am not in a mood to be brilliant, so for once there will be cause without effect."

"But as there cannot be an effect without a cause, fair Rosalind, I would know why you are not in a mood to be brilliant? and why you have been in a mood to be sad ever since the wane of the moon?"

"Ah! that is it exactly. What a philosopher you are, cousin Edred! This comes of attending the scientific meetings at Edinburgh, Dublin, Bristol, and Newcastle. The waning

of the moon influences the weather—at least so the old women say—and three wet days with dull companions would make the most mischievous, merry monkey, grave and stupid."

"Do you liken yourself to a merry, mischievous monkey, sweet coz?"

"When the whim is in me."

"And you count me a dull companion?"

"I do not count on you at all."

"Your wit is sharp this morning, cousin."

"Then do not dare its arrows."

"It will be dangerous so to do, for they are tipped with gall."

"Another great discovery, most sage philosopher!"

Edred bit his lip, and was silent for some minutes, whilst Rosalind continued her task of drawing out a pattern for Mrs. Sewell.

"What a firm and graceful touch! There are some, who might wish themselves a pencil to be guided by that little hand."

"There are some geese in the world no

doubt—ay; and some foxes too, cousin Edred," said Rosalind, glancing at her cousin.

"Is it the act of a goose, sweet Rose, to seek the regard of those we love?"

"It is the act of a fox to discourse on these things only for the purpose of entrapping."

"Entrapping, Rosalind!"

"Yes, entrapping."

"You wrong me! you will not see how highly I esteem—regard you. You will not believe that you are to me as the bright star that guides—"

"And bewilders those whom it should lead aright," said Rosalind, interrupting him impatiently. "There I know all that comes after the bright star, you see. Do for pity's sake go and say all these pretty things to Maria, if they must be uttered, and spare me the infliction."

"Infliction, Rosalind! Is this the way you receive the devotion of—"

"Yes, this is the way in which I receive all

such nonsensical flights of fancy. I told you before that I was not in the humour for such stuff this morning."

"Stuff!" exclaimed Edred warmly. "Do you call true and disinterested affection a nonsensical flight of fancy?"

"No; I utter no libels, and am not given to scandal. I only call things by their right names. You can make flowery speeches but are incapable of a true, and disinterested affection."

"I repeat you wrong me, Rosalind. You judge me hardly, unjustly," exclaimed Edred vehemently, stirred to passion by her contemptuous disbelief. "I can feel a true and disinterested affection—I do feel it—and for you."

"Do not say so—do not say so. I cannot—I would not believe it," said Rosalind, colouring at his impassioned tone.

"I do say so—it is true—too true: you doubt me still. Hear me whilst I swear—"

"Hush! you have enough to answer for already;—do not forswear yourself."

"Rosalind, this incredulity will drive me mad! I do love you—love you as I never loved before—as I can love but once. My fate—my character—my very being is in your hands—hangs on your words. Guide me—mould me as you will."

"Excuse me, Edred, but I would rather be moulded than mould; rather be guided, than guide. I tell you, a third time, that I am in no humour for these rhapsodies. Let me pass," said Rosalind, hoping by her careless manner, to stop a conversation that was already painful, and might become still more so; but her words failed of their purpose, producing instead a stronger and fiercer display of passion.

"No, Rosalind, you shall not leave me thus," throwing himself on his knees before her. "I am not the frivolous being many believe me."

"I know you are not, Edred: I should have loved you better had you been."

"I have strong feelings—strong affections."

"And strong passions.

"True 'tis a pity, pity 'tis, 'tis true."

said Rosalind, closing the sentence.

"Yes, Rosalind: passions—fierce passions. Do not rouse them."

"I am not to be daunted by threats any more than cajoled by flattery; and this you who read hearts so well should know," answered Rosalind loftily, and with the appearance of perfect self-command, though her heart quailed for an instant at his kindling ire.

"Flatter! cajole! oh! Rosalind, how ill do you read my feelings at this moment! How little do you guess the strength of the passion that forces me on to a confession of my love against my will. Yes, Rosalind; against my will I love you—and against my will I tell that love. You doubt me still. What can I say to

convince you of my deep devotion? Have you not read it in my every act? the softness of my tone when I addressed you? the lingering look when I departed?"

"I thought all this assumed to serve a purpose," said Rosalind, touched in despite of herself.

"You wished to believe so," he observed, reproachfully.

"Yes, Edred; I wished to believe so then—I wish to believe so now. Forgive me if my mistake has caused you pain. Do not seek to undeceive me—let me depart. Forget! let us both forget the last few minutes," said Rosalind very gently, trying to disengage her dress from his grasp.

"No, Rosalind; you may forget, but I cannot. You may despise my love, but you should not disbelieve it."

"To do otherwise could bring no good to either. A union with me would be imprudent, impolitic. You are in favour with Mrs. Den-

ham—I am not: you will have large possessions—I a dower of a few hundreds only."

"Talk not to me of prudence or policy, Rosalind! I think of neither when I look on you,"—he exclaimed, with passionate vehemence. "Wealth will be worthless if you share it not. Were you the child of beggary—of shame—still would I seek your hand."

"You have not always thought this, Edred."

"No, Rosalind, no. To my shame I admit that there was a time when I valued gold above your worth: nay, I wrestled with the growing love that twined its bonds around me; but in vain! until at length my haughty spirit learned to love its bondage."

"Must I believe this, Edred?"

"You must! you must!—for it is true! Doubt not the purity—the power of my regard! Look steadily upon me, and believe."

Rosalind did look upon him, and then turned away with a deep sigh and paling cheek.

"Alas! alas! would I could disbelieve you

still. I would not that even you should bear the pangs of hopeless love."

"Not even me! Oh, Rosalind, what words! Surely you do not hate me, as those words would say! — you cannot triumph in my pangs!"

"Oh! no: God knows I pity you," she said, and that so very sadly, that the sternest heart must have been moved.

"And pity, Rosalind, may turn to love. May it not, dearest? Give me hope, and I will wait upon your speech, and hang upon your looks, as waits the slave on him who rules his fate."

"Think it not! hope it not, Edred. I pity, but I cannot love you."

"Say not that! I must still hope—for what were life deprived of hope? I will fufil your wishes ere you speak them—girdle you round with such a watchful care and searching tenderness, that not a pang shall reach you. Time, and my great devotion will so win upon

you, that you shall not have the heart to say me nay."

"In this time can do nothing. Pity is all that I can ever give. Let me depart!—a longer interview can only pain us both."

"Oh! go not yet. Stay but one moment! Listen, I entreat you, to my earnest prayers! If not for me, yet for your brother, listen. The day may come when he may need your aid, and you have not the means to aid him. My bride shall lavish gold with liberal hand on those she loves: her friends should be my friends—her relatives my relatives. You are moved by my words. Think on them well. Think on the happiness of soothing, softening pain—cheering the pangs of hopeless poverty. I have seen you weep, when powerless to help—be mine, and this shall be no more. Do not believe that debt, your brother's only debt; believe that he has many such, and will have many more. A prison and disgrace await him—you, and you only can avert the evil."

"I thank you for this last remark—it warns me not to be deluded by your eloquence," said Rosalind, indignantly. "What! is it not enough that you should mar my brother's fortunes by your subtle wiles, but you must pour, into his sister's ear the history of his faults thinking to bend that sister to your will by skilful threats, weaving from out her love the cords to bind her in a bitter bondage?"

"I mar your brother's fortunes?" questioned Edred, with a start.

"Yes, Edred Cottrell; you mar my brother's fortunes! I said, and I repeat it. You would look innocent, but I detect the rising blush. Who placed that fatal letter in Mrs. Denham's path? Who gave her reason to believe that Michael Trevor had more debts? Who, playing on his frank and thoughtless gaiety, led him to utter foolish nothings, and then tortured these same foolish nothings into fit subject for reproof?"

"You are ungenerous and unjust; and I

might add ungrateful, Rosalind," said Edred with a flush of anger. "Did I not lend your brother money?"

"You did; and warned me in the charade that his sister was expected to repay the debt."

"Are words uttered in jest to be judged as though spoken in earnest? Would you have your fitness for a wife judged of by your conduct in that same charade? I acted but in character—I was to play the tyrant."

"And would fain play it ever. You did it very naturally."

"It was but in jest. Besides you know my wild and thoughtless speech is always bringing me into trouble."

"I know that your skill in words is ever bringing others into trouble. Your speech is neither wild nor thoughtless—you said yourself but lately that you were not the frivolous being many thought; and then for once you spoke the truth. But for you, Michael might still have retained Mrs. Denham's favor."

"Did she tell you this?"

"No, you have succeded in deluding her—me you cannot delude."

"You are a hard and prejudiced judge, Rosalind; you wish to believe me guilty and therefore will not believe me innocent—you make charges which you can bring no proofs to substantiate, and yet give no credit to my denials. Have I not cause to complain of this?" he questioned, sorrow and anger mingling in his tone.

"You have brought it on yourself by this ungenerous perseverance."

"My humble pleading for your love—can you call that ungenerous perseverance? Does my disinterested regard deserve no kinder treatment than rude taunts?"

"You provoked me to these upbraidings by referring to my brother. Let me go, lest I pain you more. You cannot blind me by your flattery."

"Blind you!—would that I could couch

your blindness, then would you see there is no feigning in my love. Nay go not yet—linger awhile! you have not heard the half that I could urge."

"It would be all in vain," said Rosalind coldly, hurt at his pertinacity. "I cannot—will not grant you more than pity. Press me no further, lest such pressing tempt me to fresh reproofs;—I would depart with gentle words upon my lips."

"And gentle thoughts within your heart?—say that too, Rosalind. Reprove and taunt me if you must—I will bear all with patience, if you but give me hope, however distant. Will years of slavish servitude obtain your love?"

"No, only my contempt;—my love can only follow my esteem—I wish not to be served by slaves. It is useless to detain me thus," she added resolutely, "paining yourself and paining me; and forcing me to tell you bitter truths. Be satisfied—I cannot love you."

"And why not, Rosalind?" he questioned

fiercely, springing up and looking keenly into her face, whilst he laid his hand on her arm.

"I have told you already—my love can only follow my esteem," she answered firmly, though it required an effort to maintain even the show of self-possession so wrathful was his gaze.

"Psha! Rosalind, I am no idiot to be fooled by moral apothegms; and you should know it. Why can you not love me? Speak boldly out—you who are so fond of telling bitter truths. What no reply? then I must answer for you. You cannot love me for you love another. Ha! it is so; I have guessed the truth," he added, grasping her arm with violence, and looking into her half averted face with a mingling of jealous anger, and triumphant malice. "You would deny it, but you cannot:—your lips move but no words come forth—you tremble—your ashy cheek proclaims you guilty. And who has stolen away the

heart that I would die to call my own? What silent still? Is this from shame or maiden bashfulness. You will not answer? then I must. Turn not away, for I would look upon that face and read if I speak truly. You love—and he you love is Rupert Wyvill. That faint sad cry—that drooping face—those trembling limbs confirm my words," he cried his very nostrils growing white with rage, even whilst a glance of triumph at her suffering shot from his burning eye. "Shall I proclaim this love? the love that only follows on esteem—the love that does not heed a jury's verdict, or the contempt of honorable men? Shall I tell all of the soft toying beneath Balder Cliff?"

"Tell what you will. The tongue can find no words to speak the malice of that heart," said Rosalind with a burst of indignation, flinging off his grasp, and fronting him with a firm and commanding air. The face was pale, but not a limb shook; and she quailed not beneath his burning glance. "Dare you thus name that

name to me, and in the same breath speak of juries and of honorable men? The shaft you sped recoils upon yourself. Who plotted evil by the hawthorn dell? Who bribed to perjury then triumphed in the pang his crime inflicted? Think you I did not know you? What thoughts were in your mind at Balder Cliff? Your hands were on the rope—your rival's life depended on your strength;—a little wavering—a sudden weakness—and he you hated would have crossed your path no more."

A rush of many mingled passions swept over Edred's face, leaving a cold and clammy dew upon his brow—the hue of death on lip and cheek.

"What mean you?" he gasped forth, striving to rally; but his voice was hollow and his teeth chattered,—"of what would you accuse me?"

"Ask your own heart, and pray for pardon," answered Rosalind solemnly, shocked at the

effect of her own words. "Let me pass," she added loftily, as he endeavoured to bar her passage by standing before her.

He drew back with a shudder, and she walked past him with a stately air.

"Have you forgotten the lady at Drinkborne?" demanded Edred Cottrell with a fiendish sneer, as Rosalind's hand was on the lock.

"No, nor the malignant skill of the tale bearer. That lady is my most intimate friend," replied Rosalind firmly; but she stayed not to hear further remark—she lingered not to look on the speaker.

A hollow mutter—a murmured threat broke on her ears as she closed the door, and hurried to her room.

When she next met Edred he was gay and amusing as ever; polite, but not servilely so, to Mrs. Denham; watchful, but not obtrusive in his attentions to herself. No one could have guessed from his demeanour the scene of the

morning; even Rosalind began almost to believe it a dream; and then she shuddered to think what a depth of deception was hid beneath that careless speech and merry laugh.

CHAPTER IV.

The morning brought a letter for Rosalind from her father, and a faintness came over her as she read the contents.

"What is the matter?" asked Mrs. Sewell, her attention having been drawn to Rosalind's agitation by a look from her hostess.

Rosalind placed the letter in her hand with a burst of tears that saved her from fainting.

Mrs. Sewell read it with sundry expressions of grief, surprise, and alarm, then handed it to Mrs. Denham, who prepared for its perusal in a methodical manner, first settling

her spectales properly upon her nose, then walking to the window to obtain a better light, for the writing was scarcely legible from the hurry and agitation of the penman."

"Dear, dear me, what will you do?" asked Mrs. Sewell, with tears in her eyes.

"Return home on the instant, of course," answered Rosalind, checking her sobs. "Will you, my dear Mrs. Sewell, beg your servant to give the requisite orders, whilst I go and pack; and pray bid him make all possible haste," she added, as she was leaving the room.

The letter was from Captain Trevor, saying that her mother waa dangerously ill, and giving it as his private opinion, that her illness, if not caused, was at least increased by her anxiety for a reconciliation with Mrs. Denham.

Rosalind would not herself have put this letter into the hands of her hostess, and perhaps had she been consulted on the subject, she might have objected to its being done by another; but since Mrs. Sewell had done it on

the impulse of the moment, without consideration or consultation, she was not sorry that Mrs. Denham should thus become acquainted with the feelings of her early friend: it might soften her resentment, and lead to the reunion so much desired by the invalid.

"Mrs. Denham will send her own horses with you to C—, and my servant shall go with you the remainder of the way," said Mrs. Sewell, entering Rosalind's room soon after. "But, dear child, why did not you summon my maid to pack for you? I see you do not know what you are about," she added, catching her young favorite's bewildered look, and observing that all her dresses were scattered about in wild confusion."

"No: I do not indeed," said Rosalind, pressing her hand to her head to stay the throbbing of her temples. "So many trials have come upon me lately, and I have not been so strong since my illness. And then my mother—my dear, dear mother! if she should die! die, and

I not see her. Oh, that I had never come here!—never left Ivy Cottage!" she exclaimed, clasping her hands with a fresh burst of tears.

"Oh! but she won't die;—she shan't die, dear child," cried the kind hearted Mrs. Sewell, throwing her arms around her, and mingling her tears with hers. "But here is Harmer. Let her pack your clothes, and come to my dressing room, for I want to talk to you; and the carriage will be ready in a few minutes."

"What did Mrs. Denham say on reading the letter?" asked Rosalind abruptly, when established in her friend's dressing room.

"That is one thing I wished to tell you. She said it was very sad, and of course she could not hope to detain you here, so her horses should take you to C. She would have sent her carriage and servant all the way, if I had not had both to offer."

"And that was all she said?—very sad, and she could not hope to detain me," repeated Rosalind indignantly. "And not one word of

affectionate regret for the dangerous illness of her earliest and once dearest friend!— not even a good wish—a commonplace message to soothe one suffering—perhaps dying!"

"My dear, Rosa, you take up these things too warmly—you judge so hastily. She said it was very sad; and she really looked very pale when she said so. Mrs. Denham is not like me, my dear; she does not say all she thinks."

"No; not at all like you, dear Minny. Would that she were!"

"Besides, dear child, she begs that when you have taken leave of all the others you will go and wish her good bye in her study; and then I dare say she will be very kind, and send an affectionate message to your poor, dear mother."

"She may say what she pleases; words are but words, and deserve little gratitude. Had she ever truly loved my mother I should not return alone; but she cannot love—it is not in her nature."

"Perhaps you will say the same of me, dear

Rose, for not going back with you; and yet I am sure I love your mother and yourself too very much," said Mrs. Sewell in some confusion.

"That I am sure you do, dear Minny; I was not thinking of you when I spoke."

"No, I am certain of that, dear child, only perhaps it may seem odd, and even unkind—yet it is not unkind. The fact is I wished to go back with you very much, only Mrs. Denham appears so averse to it, that it seems to me as if it would be more prudent for me to remain here; and then I shall be at hand to advocate your cause."

"I beg, Mrs. Sewell, that you will not think of advocating my cause;—I have no cause," answered Rosalind warmly."

"Now, Rosa, my dear child, don't speak in that way—don't look so proud," said Mrs. Sewell soothingly, vexed and perplexed how to please her old friend, and her young one too. "Mrs. Denham made such a point of my stay-

ing that I could not well go without offending her; and then she might be angry with you as the reason; and that would never do. She says all her other guests are going, and then she shall be left all alone. You cannot think how earnest she was for my stay, or I am sure I should not have yielded."

"Oh! you did quite right. It would be a sad thing for Mrs. Denham to be left alone, as she has been left a thousand times before with a house full of servants, and a neighbourhood full of friends."

"Now, Rosa dear, how can you speak in that proud, scornful manner?" said Mrs. Sewell coaxingly. "You know that I mean no unkindness—you know that I love you and your dear mother a thousand times better than Mrs. Denham; and that I only remain through prudence, and a consideration for your interest. Indeed you are neither just nor reasonable."

"That is very true, Minny; I am neither, and above all very ungrateful to vex you with

my proud remarks," cried the warm hearted girl, quite subdued by her old friend's reproaches, and giving her an affectionate hug to appease her.

Rosalind's own conscience was a witness against her; she was unjust and unreasonable, for at the very moment that she was blaming Mrs. Denham much for detaining her old friend, and that old friend a little for being detained, she could not but admit that, under other circumstances, she would have rejoiced in this detention, for Mrs. Sewell through her excess of kindness and deficiency in judgment was the most fidgetty, and at times troublesome of nurses.

"Ah! now you are my own dear Rosalind again," said the old lady quite appeased, returning the affectionate embrace. "You must write to me every day—mind every day. You know I never grudge postage; and I shall be unhappy if I do not hear as often as I can. You promise me, Rosalind?"

"Yes; you shall hear every day."

"And mind too that should your mother wish for me, I will go to her directly in spite of Mrs. Denham; and should she unhappily get worse I will not stay away another minute. And, Rose my dear, you must not mind taking this from your old friend, to pay for your journey—travelling post is expensive," she added, putting a twenty pound note into Rosalind's hand, who drew back with a blush, then, seeing that Mrs. Sewell was hurt at her reluctance to accept her gift, she made no further demur, but thanked her with a warmth that set them both crying together.

The sound of carriage wheels precluded more last speeches, and warned Rosalind to tie on her bonnet.

Her trunks were all corded—her general adieux all paid, and Rosalind stood with swimming eyes, and a beating heart before Mrs. Denham in her study.

"I am no great talker, Miss Trevor; and

if I were you would not thank me for detaining you at the present moment with a long set speech about my regret to part with you. To yourself I fear your sojourn here has caused more pain than pleasure—it has been a time of trial rather than enjoyment; I would it had been different, but I cannot control the hearts of others—it is a hard task enough to control my own."

Rosalind looked up in surprise. The speaker's tone was sad, and she almost fancied that there were traces of weeping on her cheeks and tears in her glistening eyes; but she made no reply, and Mrs. Denham continued.

"I conclude Mrs. Sewell has told you that I dissuaded her from accompanying you. I did not know what your wishes were, but, judging from myself I thought that my old friend with all her kindness was not a nurse to be desired in a serious illness. I hope I have

not done wrong in this—at least you must acquit us both of intentional unkindness."

"Indeed I do," said Rosalind warmly—the more warmly from a consciousness of having before judged her hostess harshly on this point.

"I trust so, Miss Trevor; for I should be sorry if you believed that I detained her only because I could not bear to be alone as I set forth to her, not liking to hint at her being too fussy for a sick room. To satisfy and acquit me to my own conscience, you must engage to write daily and truly as she desires."

"I will not fail, madam; you may depend on that."

There was a short, a very short pause, and then Mrs. Denham spoke again with a little embarrassment, as her guest imagined, and in a colder tone than she had used before.

"I hope you will find Mrs. Trevor better than your letter has led you to expect; but as

illness is expensive I must beg you to accept of this trifle to procure luxuries for the invalid; or if such should not be needed dispose of it as you please. And now I will detain you no longer, than to wish you a safe and expeditious journey."

Mrs. Denham's draft for a hundred pounds lay open in Rosalind's hand; but her fingers did not close upon it, and the tears stood in her eyes restrained from falling by wounded pride and disappointed affection. She uttered no words of gratitude, but there she stood, fronting the giver, and gazing into her face with quivering lips and a flushed cheek.

"You need feel no scruples about taking it, Miss Trevor, as I intend making a present to all my young relatives on their departure. If I gave more to your brother, if I give more to others—"

"Oh, madam, can you suppose me displeased at your not giving me more? Can you really understand me so ill?" exclaimed

Rosalind indignantly, the tears which she had no longer the power to repress falling fast as she spoke. "Take back your money," she added holding out the paper, "take it back, and know me better."

"No, Miss Trevor; a gift cannot be recalled," said Mrs. Denham, speaking more slowly and deliberately even than was her wont.

"It can be rejected—destroyed," answered Rosalind proudly, attempting to tear the paper.

"Stop!" said Mrs. Denham, laying her hand on her arm. "That note was given to procure luxuries for your sick mother should she need them;—are you justified in rejecting, or destroying what may contribute to the comfort of another. The time may come when she may need even necessaries."

"Then I must keep it—thank you for the gift, yet know that you despise my meanness and deem me mercenary," said Rosalind with a drooping head, bowed down with shame.

"I do not deem you mercenary—I do not accuse you of meanness. Will that content you?" asked Mrs. Denham.

"I will tell you what will content me," cried Rosalind with passionate earnestness, letting the paper fall, as she clasped her hands in entreaty. "Take back the money!—I feel humbled by accepting it—and send instead a message to my mother. Let me bear her a few kind words—a few kind wishes from the friend of her youth; she would prize them more than all the wealth that friend possesses."

"I hope she will recover—I feel assured that she will," said Mrs. Denham, turning away from the earnest pleader, and speaking very slowly.

"And is that all you will say to her whom you loved in your youth? The only message you will send to one sick, perhaps dying?" asked Rosalind mournfully.

"I have no more to say, and would not

detain you longer," answered Mrs. Denham with the same chilling deliberation.

"I will not distress you by my longer stay, but rid you at once of an unwelcome guest," said Rosalind proudly. "I have to thank you madam, for some kindness, which shall not be forgotten; and should you ever long for the soothing tones of affection, may they not be denied to you, as you deny them to my mother. Good morning, madam."

"My dear Rosalind, pray do not weep in that wild way," exclaimed poor Mrs. Sewell, encountering the sobbing girl as she crossed the hall to the carriage from Mrs. Denham's study. "I am sure your mother will soon recover—I feel a presentiment that she will."

"Don't cry so, Rosalind; whilst there is hope there is life, and one living woman is worth two dead men," said Richard Weston, touched with pity, and trying to console her in

) himself.

"I cannot bear your tears—I cannot hate you as you hate me. Shall I accompany you? Can I be of any use?" whispered Edred Cottrell as his cousin stood at the hall door, whilst Richard was looking to the safety of the trunks, and Mrs. Sewell was giving directions to her servant.

Rosalind looked upon him in wonder. Was his sympathy real? Were his offers of service sincere? They were—she could not doubt it, and there was pity in her look and tone as she declined those offers. He loved—loved without hope—and she could feel for that, though she could not return his regard, and deemed him unworthy of her esteem. Had she wished for revenge it was hers. He might have wealth—but not happiness.

"The study bell rang; Rosalind lingered a moment, hoping to receive some message. The servant brought her a small packet. His mistress's compliments, and Miss Trevor had left it in the study by mistake."

It was the bill for a hundred pounds which Rosalind had left on the floor, where it had fallen, and never thought of since; and which Mrs. Denham had enclosed and sent after her.

"My compliments to Mrs. Denham, and I am much obliged," was her answering message, as a glance at the packet told her its contents.

There was no reason for any further delay, and the carriage drove off amid the kind wishes of Mrs. Sewell, and the two young men who had handed her in.

No sooner had she passed through the gates than she gave way to a wilder and more passionate burst of grief; and it was not till the last tree on the Denham domain had been left far behind that she became sufficiently calm to note the objects that met her view.

She shuddered on entering the inn-yard where she had parted with her father some weeks before. Then she had been free in heart—buoyant in spirit—gay in mood—feeling no grief—and fearing none. What was she

now? Bowed down with shame and sorrow, bearing the burden of an unrequited, unsought love—dreading a doting mother's loss.

"Oh! that I had never gone to Denham!" was her thought. And yet, despite the warning voice of prudence and of reason, she would not if she could have obliterated all remembrance of her visit there—she would not if she could have forgotten Rupert. He should never guess her regard — she had done — would do all she could to promote his happiness—his union with another; but she would remain single for his sake.

And who so cold, so rigid, as to mock at the simple fancies of a young and loving heart? its lofty devotion—its unwavering self-sacrifice—may he who mocks, and she who jests, never be blessed with such a love!

As the carriage approached Ivy Cottage, all other hopes and fears were forgotten, and Rosalind thought only of her mother—leaning eagerly out of the window to catch a word

from the villagers as she passed rapidly on—to mark some object that should give sign of amendment. She fancied the villagers looked sad—she fancied the cottage and garden looked dull—mourning for the absence of their mistress. Her father was not in his study—the blinds were down in the sick room—old Bruno did not come to the door to welcome her; and her heart died within her.

"My mother?" she gasped, unable to utter more.

"Better, Miss Rosa," said the maid, with an encouraging smile.

"Thank heaven!" cried the overjoyed Rosalind; and the next moment she was weeping in Captain Trevor's arms, who had hurried down to receive her.

The sufferings of the last few days had been too much for her, and it was some time ere she was sufficiently recovered to question and answer with any tolerable degree of calmness.

Mrs. Trevor was better. The crisis of her disorder had passed, but her amendment was very slow; and it was months before she could wander in the garden, or even leave the house.

In answer to her eager inquiries as to how Mrs. Denham had borne the account of her illness, and what were the feelings which she entertained towards her, Rosalind, anxious to spare her mother all needless pain, reported only the more friendly part of their conversation in the study, and on this her daughter saw, with vexation, that she built strong hopes of a future reconciliation — hopes strengthened by Mrs. Sewell's letters, who was in the habit of believing all she wished, and saying what she thought would please those to whom she wrote; and that not from any absolute intention to deceive, but only from her exceeding kindness of heart. Mrs. Denham's gift to Rosalind was a proof of good will that spoke for itself, and could not be argued away; and Mrs. Trevor looked for further marks of friendship

till even she had become almost a bankrupt in hope.

Without entering on painful explanations and recounting all that had passed between Mrs. Denham and herself, relative to Michael and Rupert, which she did not consider herself justified in doing, Rosalind saw the impossibility of making her mother comprehend the complete estrangement of the friend of her youth; so she had no alternative but to allow her to indulge in happy dreams, which could never be realised — her very delicate health rendering any agitation or sudden disappointment dangerous.

Captain Trevor comprehended the state of the case from his daughter's manner, but agreed with Rosalind that it was better not to undeceive his wife on a point in which her heart was so much interested. Time would gradually show her the fallacy of such expectations; and to time, therefore, was the task committed.

Mrs. Denham had said truly that illness was expensive, very expensive, especially such a protracted illness as Mrs. Trevor's, where luxuries were required to tempt the failing appetite, and strengthen the enfeebled frame; and as Rosalind marked the effect of the delicacies supplied by Mrs. Denham's gift, she learnt to feel more grateful to the donor.

Winter came, but brought with it little change. Mrs. Trevor continued very delicate, and Rosalind, though ever cheerful when with the invalid, grew thin and pale—so thin and pale that her parents became alarmed, fearing that anxiety and a too great confinement to the sick room were injuring her health. They urged her to visit some friends and try change of air; but the idea of quitting Ivy Cottage, or even mingling in the society round appeared so painful that they gave up the point, rather than distress her by insisting on it.

She admitted that she looked ill, though not as ill as they asserted, and allowed that she had

never quite recovered from the effects of her indisposition at Denham, subsequent fright at Balder Cliffs, and the succeeding anxiety for her mother; but persisted that she was getting better every day, and that when spring really came she should be as blooming as ever.

Fresh air and country walks would set her up again—and where was there such good air, or such pretty walks as round Ivy Cottage? She could enjoy neither change of scene nor society till her mother was restored to health; and if away from her should only grow thinner and paler, so they must let her have her own way for once, and then like a butterfly she should come out all beauty in summer."

"Let you have your own way for once, Rosalind? I fear we let you have it too often," said her father with a melancholy shake of the head; for he could not but fancy her spirits forced, and doubted her renovation with the spring.

"I will never assent to that, my very des-

potically inclined papa. Better—far better! if you had allowed me to have my way before, and not sent me to Denham Park."

"Why, what great evil befel you there?" asked both parents at once, struck with her tone.

"Then dear mamma might not have been ill—and old Bruno might not have died—and my favorite rose-bush might not have been blown down—and the old turkey-cock might not have been broken its leg, nor Goody Rutter's blind mare fallen into the quarry, as she assured me two days ago," answered Rosalind gaily, humming a merry tune as she quitted the room.

It was impossible not to smile at the odd medley of mischances occasioned by Rosalind's absence, but Captain Trevor's smile was succeeded by another melancholy shake of the head; he feared to distress his wife in her delicate state, but the conviction grew upon him that there was some other cause for the

change in his child, than she choose to name. As she showed such a great disinclination to be questioned on the subject however, perhaps it would be better to indulge her, as he was sure he could trust to her good sense and firmness; if he could aid her, he knew she would apply to him for aid:—so Rosalind was allowed to remain quiet at home, and sadly, very sadly passed the winter.

Now first she really understood the inconstancy of human happiness. The ills of life were crowding round her—the pains and penalties of womanhood besetting her. Michael was always a bad correspondent—Mrs. Sewell was nursing a sick relative in the south of France; besides, as we have said before, she never wrote what her friends most wished to hear; and Anne was discouraged from writing by Mrs. Weston, who grudged the postage of all letters not likely to advance the interest of herself or children, so Rosalind's information as to the howabouts and whereabouts—the

comings and goings of her young cousins, and the rest of the family party assembled at Denham had been very scanty.

Maria was wooed by a Baronet of middling fortune with whom by her mother's desire, she played fast and loose till the sentiments of a rich old Earl, who seemed much struck with her beauty could be ascertained.

Terry Weston had some idea of bestowing himself with stock and whiskers on a city heiress, whose ideas did not outnumber his own; whilst his brother Richard, notwithstanding his boasted acuteness, had been taken in by some gentlemen sharpers.

Mrs. Bailey was as good natured as usual, and her daughters giggled and flirted as before, at least so wrote Anne in one of the very few letters received by Rosalind. Of Rupert Wyvill nothing was said; but Edred Cottrell's proceedings were minutely detailed, owing to the fancy of the amiable writer, that his proceedings were more interesting to Rosa-

lind than those of others. He was a frequent visitor at Denham, much consulted by its mistress, and ever a welcome and favored guest.

Rosalind laid down the letter with a sigh; then starting from a reverie into which she had been thrown by its contents, she busied herself in cutting out some work for the village school children. There were subjects on which she dared not allow her mind to dwell, and many remarked, with admiration, the activity and industry of Rosalind Trevor, little guessing the wearing grief that lay beneath.

Susan Wray was a worse correspondent than any of her other friends. It was many months since Rosalind had heard from her; and to write and scold was impossible, as she did not know her direction.

CHAPTER V.

The snows of winter melted away beneath the cheering beams of a February sun, and the crocuses and snow-drops were peeping forth when Michael unexpectedly made his appearance at Ivy Cottage, to the great delight of its inmates.

"He could not stay many days, so they must pet him accordingly. He was rejoiced to see his mother looking so much better than he had dared to hope, and trusted his presence would quite restore her."

The fond mother smiled on her handsome, good tempered son, and declared herself already improved in health by his mere arrival.

But of all at Ivy Cottage none were so much delighted as Rosalind at her brother's coming. Alas! that we so little know at what to rejoice, and at what to mourn.

"What a dear creature you are, Michael, to come all the way out of —shire, to see us only for a few days," said Rosalind, caressingly, twining her arm within her brother's, as they set off for a walk on the succeeding day.

"Perhaps not quite as good and disinterested as you imagine," answered Michael, with some embarrassment.

"I did not laud you for being disinterested, Michael, hoping that you have as much pleasure in seeing us, as we have in seeing you."

"I ought to have, Rosalind, for you are a dear, good soul; but the truth is, I am come to coax you to do me a most essential service."

"Coax, Mike!—I thought it was only we

weak, frivolous women who coaxed, and that you grand, sturdy, reasonable men, always commanded—particularly wives and sisters."

"Why, Rose, you are getting your old spirits again; and because Rupert Wyvill is not here to tilt with breaking a lance on me. It is very pleasant to command—there is no doubt of that—but it is seldom the lot of a poor subaltern, who must submit to be drilled by circumstances; besides, you have none of the elements of slavery in your composition, and might rebel, so I must employ coaxing, willy nilly."

"Oh! by all means, now that you have given reasons for so doing:—gentlemen never do any thing without good and sufficient reasons—at least so you say."

"I must get you a husband to tame you," said her brother laughingly; "you are a wild colt still."

"Nay, nay, dear Mike, no need of taming me; it has been a sad, sad winter, and even

now my smiles are faint and chill as a December sunbeam glading across a trackless snow. There is no warmth in my gaiety as in days past—it has little power to cheer myself or others. But let that pass!" she added in a less melancholy tone. "What can I do to please you?"

"What you offered to do for me before, my dear, kind sister—namely, lend me your godmother's legacy."

"Oh! Michael, you have not run into debt again?" exclaimed Rosalind, in alarm. "Do not tell me that!"

"Don't be silly, Rose, and make a fuss about nothing. It is all vastly fine for people rolling in riches like Mrs. Denham to preach about keeping within yonr income, but when a a poor unhappy wretch has no income to live upon, what is he to do? *Il faut vivre* — let the learned judge dispute the point as long as he will with the unlearned thief."

"No income, dear Michael! what do you

mean? When papa bought your commission, he reckoned that, with economy, you could live very comfortably on your pay and yearly allowance; and you then said the same."

"Pooh, Rose; I did not know any thing of life then, and so could be no judge. There may be a few people who have a talent for economy, and living comfortably on nothing, but unhappily I am not one of that few; and what is more, if report speaks true, Captain Trevor had no such talent in his youth, though he forgets all this now that he is grown old."

"But to spend more than you have — to incur debts which you may never be able to pay! Indeed, indeed, Michael, it is not honourable," said his sister, earnestly.

"I never expected to hear Rosalind Trevor brand her brother with dishonour," exclaimed Michael, reddening with anger and vexation.

"Oh, Michael! I did not mean that—you

know I did not," cried the affectionate girl with tears in her eyes, clinging to the arm which he endeavoured to withdraw.

"Then I do not know what you did mean, Rosalind, not being skilled in delicate definitions; but if you do not choose to lend me the money say so, and there is an end of it—only do pray spare me a lecture."

"Had all the world asserted that you would ever be unkind, I would not have believed them," said Rosalind very sadly, Mrs. Denham's warning striking with painful force upon her mind.

"Do not think me unkind, my own dear sister; I can never be so to you," replied her brother subdued by her gentle reproach, and kissing away her tears. "I am a downright brute to say any thing harsh to you, Rose; but the truth is, I am driven half mad by duns, and if you will not assist me I shall be in gaol within three weeks; and then—hey for my promotion!"

"And you see all these consequences, Michael, and yet—"

"Yes I see them all so you need not remind me of them," said her brother, stopping her words with another kiss. "I know all you would urge—I feel all you would have me feel. Do not encrease my pangs by reproaches—spare me those and I will strive to be all you wish for the future."

"You know that I would do any thing to serve you," said Rosalind affectionately, and yet she sighed, for her penetration made her doubt his present penitence, or future self-denial.

"All you can to serve me?" questioned her brother, looking anxiously into her face.

"Do not doubt me, dear Michael. Where is the delight of having money if not to make those happy whom we love? But do you need all the legacy?"

"What have you a *leetle* debt of your own for satins, and silks, and feathers and flowers?"

asked her brother archly, "Ah, Rose! Rose! And this after lecturing me," he added holding up his finger in rebuke.

"I have no debts but those of affection," answered Rosalind gravely, hurt at his suspicions. "As you know, Mrs. Denham's hundred pounds has been already expended on account of my dear mother's illness, and I intended when I came into my little fortune to present her and papa with two very comfortable easy chairs. Can you not leave me enough for that, Michael?"

"You are an angel, Rosalind! Would that I resembled you!" exclaimed her brother, touched and shamed by her words. "You are always thinking of others—never of yourself."

"Ah! Michael; you cannot read my heart or you would not say so," answered his sister blushing at his praise. "And don't talk nonsense about angels—that is only what silly boys say to silly girls. Tell me how much you really want?"

"All, Rosalind!—more if you had it;—I do not deserve such a sister. But I hope soon to be able to repay it;—a friend is to put me in the way of becoming rich, and, at any rate, you shall have enough for the two chairs by the time you come of age. I am ashamed to take the money, but my difficulties are so great that I cannot do without it," he said, trying to excuse himself to himself—no difficult task to one, who judged all leniently, and himself more leniently than any."

"Do not imagine that I wish to retain the money, dear Michael; you are welcome to it, quite welcome; but if you have other debts I fear this will be only a temporary relief, and I have no more to give."

"I know that, dear Rose. That formal, prosy old woman should leave you her property, for you deserve it; and she ought to have given you as much as she gave me, though to be sure you never would play civil to her, and with all her pretence she likes to be

courted and flattered as well as other people; and what is more she is as proud as the old gentleman himself; and as unforgiving too, or she would be reconciled to my mother; but it is of no use to talk of these things. I can put off my other creditors, and it is something to gain time;—a trump may turn up—I may marry an heiress. What would you say to a very rich sister in law?"

"I should most gladly welcome an amiable one, with a moderate fortune," answered Rosalind gravely.

"Oh! of course she would be amiable—all heiresses are. But let us settle about your legacy," he continued, as if to change the conversation. "Will you sign a paper engaging to pay over the money to me immediately on your coming of age?"

"I will do any thing you wish; but you seemed to think at Denham that there would be great difficulty in obtaining an advance on such a paper."

"True; but I did not then know so well how to manage these things. I will ask Lennard about it for his father kept him so short for years before his death, that he was obliged to apply to some accommodating money lenders."

"Had not you better apply to some one else? I doubt his being very acute in these matters. Besides, I do not exactly wish him to become the depositary of our family secrets."

"Oh! he is acute enough for that. And why do you object to his being instructed in our family proceedings?"

"I do not exactly know," answered Rosaland colouring.

"Anglice, you do not exactly choose to tell, my pretty sister. Would you rather that I should consult Edred Cottrell?"

"No, no; I hope you tell him nothing," observed Rosalind quickly in answer to his mischievous look.

"Why not? He tells me a great deal, sweet Rose."

"And what does he tell you?" asked Rosalind proudly.

"He tells me that he loves a sister of mine; the most generous and affectionate, yet unaccountable of human beings."

"It would show more delicacy if he said no such thing."

"Umph! Some people have odd notions of delicacy. You need not look so lofty—he did not say that you loved him."

"He would have uttered a falsehood if he had."

"But what if he hopes that you may at some future time?"

"Convince him that his hopes can never be fulfilled. He should know this—I told him so too plainly to be misunderstood."

"Then you really refused him in right earnest, after making me believe that you were attached to him?"

"I do not know what you mean by making you believe that I was attached to him; I never told you so; on the contrary, you know how vexed I was at your borrowing money from him."

"I took that for squeamishness—a girlish fancy not to be obliged to your lover. You were always talking and laughing with him."

"You would be more correct, if you said that he was always talking and laughing with me; besides, I never heard that talking and laughing were proofs of love."

"Perhaps not; but blushing is, and you are like—

"A red, red rose that's newly sprung in June."

"I colour from vexation."

"I cannot see any such great cause for vexation in being loved by Edred Cottrell, young, handsome, clever, amiable, and besides his present income, pretty certain of coming in for Denham. You cannot doubt the strength of his affection."

"I wish I could; I would spare even him the pang of loving hopelessly."

"That you can easily do by returning his regard."

"Never," cried Rosalind, resolutely.

"Aye, you are just like others of your sex; so tender-hearted in words, so hard-hearted in acts. It is very provoking, for it would be a capital match for you, and then you might assist your brother, as he is a fine, generous fellow, and always ready to serve me."

Rosalind shuddered. Assist your brother? —such had been Edred's own words. Was he twining his toils around her? Would he leave her no means of escape? Would he ensnare her through her purest affections.

"What can you bring against him?" asked her brother, finding that she made no reply.

"A thousand things:— there is scarcely a crime of which I do not believe him capable, if its commission could advance his interests,

and be hid from the world: I would rather be in my grave than wed Edward Cottrell."

"You speak strongly, Rosalind," observed her brother, startled by her vehemence.

"Not more strongly than I feel; but, answer me, Michael, and answer me truly, have you borrowed money of Edred?"

"I am not in the habit of uttering falsehoods, Rosalind, that you need adjure me to answer truly. It was nonsense your making me promise not to borrow money of him; but I have kept my word."

"Thank heaven!" exclaimed Rosalind, fervently.

"You are exceedingly thankful for nothing, in my opinion. Better borrow of him than of others who require usurious interest; but it is of no use arguing the point with you; when a woman once takes a fancy into her head, there is no reasoning her out of it. This silly fancy is very provoking, nevertheless; for, as I said before, he is a fine fellow, and inclined to

show me every kindness. I have seen a great deal of him lately, and he has introduced me to some monstrous agreeable companions."

"Distrust him—shun him—he will show you kindness from no good motive;" said Rosalind earnestly, turning very pale.

"Nonsense, Rose, you behold him with jaundiced eyes; though why I cannot conceive for young girls are not wont to consider love to themselves an unpardonable crime. He and his friends are very pleasant associates."

"Are his friends such as I should approve of?" asked Rosalind eagerly.

"Such as you would approve of!" repeated her brother laughing:—"Why, no one stands muster with you who is not fitted to be teacher in a Sunday-school. Enough for me that I have spent the last fortnight very pleasantly with them in town."

"In town, Michael! I thought you came direct from —shire."

"I was obliged to stay some days in town

on business" replied her brother, in confusion, striking at a thistle with his switch as he spoke.

"Business," repeated the startled Rosalind: —"I do not like the word."

"Women never do — they cannot understand it, and therefore they dislike it."

"Staying in town is very expensive," reremarked his sister, after a pause.

"Yes, but business—military business must be attended to."

Rosalind sighed: she wished to believe him, and yet she could not help remarking his confusion at her observations, and remembering that he had given his parents cause to understand that he was come direct from his regiment in ——shire.

"I wish I had known your opinion of Edred earlier, for young Ridgeway was amazingly struck, and I am sure would have fallen deeply in love with you if I had not hinted your attachment to Cottrell; and as things have turned

out, he would have been nearly as good a match for you."

"Are you so tired of your sister that you wish to get rid of her?" asked Rosalind reproachfully.

"No, Rose: but I wish to see you in a station better fitting your beauty and talents."

"I am in the station in which it has pleased Heaven to place me—let that suffice; and I must entreat you not to play match maker. If you persist, I give fair notice that I will do all in my power to thwart your plans."

"That I can believe, for in some things you are nearly as proud and particular as Mrs. Denham herself, so I shall be secret as the grave in my plots. Ridgeway is out of the question now, for, despairing of you, he is paying his devoirs to another."

"I am rejoiced to hear it."

"The greater simpleton you, sweet sister; you may go further and fare worse; and as for your having a taste for old-maidism, I never

believe young ladies when they make such assertions."

"Then I shall not trouble myself to assert it."

"A very wise resolve; but here we are at home again, so suppose you sign that paper at once: I shall be glad to get this business off my mind."

There is only one thing," said Rosalind, as she held the pen in her hand. "If my father should ask me what I have done with the money, what can I say?"

"I thought you had already made all the objections that could be made, but you have always more in reserve, I find," observed her brother, pettishly. "When was a woman at fault for an excuse, if she wished to make one."

"You know my strict adherence to truth," replied Rosalind, reprovingly.

"Oh! yes; some people make a bugbear of truth, till one is sick of the very name. But it does not matter—you will not be of age for

some time, and long before then I hope to have won my heiress. So much for a handsome person!—it can be coined into gold."

"Surely you cannot mean that you would sell yourself for wealth?"

"That would I, from the top of my head, to the tip of my toe. But do not look so terrified, child, I am not going to sell myself to the Evil One, even for a well filled purse that shall never diminish in weight. My heiress is no fright either, and if a *leetle* bit of a shrew, it will only make her the more piquante. Now do not perpetrate a long lecture on my wickedness, Rose; all have not your romantic notions, and I was never intended to perform the hero in 'All for love, or the world well lost.' If you were pestered with duns as I am, you would do as I do; so sign this like a kind sister, and I really will try to be a good boy for the future," he added, kissing her cheek and guiding her hand to the paper.

Rosalind looked at him with many mis-

givings, but wrote her name;—she saw that remonstrance at that moment would be useless —might seem unkind, and therefore was silent.

Michael returned from his ride in high spirits "It is all settled;—I shall get on capitally; and all through you, dear Rose," whispered her brother as he joined her at the window. "Lennard is a capital fellow!"—a favorite phrase with Michael as may have been already discovered. "By the way, my dear mother, *(apropos des bottes)* I have asked Lennard to dine here," he added aloud.

Michael's spirits never flagged during his short stay at Ivy Cottage, and not only did young Lennard dine there that day, but also on several others.

Amiable and good tempered, if he did not set the table in a roar himself, he could laugh with those who did; and if:—

> "He never said a *clever* thing
> He *often* did a wise one."

Michael's manner to Rosalind was most affectionate; and in spite of her former misgivings, she began to hope that, warned by the difficulties and vexations of the past, he would be more prudent, more considerate for the future.

"I shall be here again in May, Rosalind, so please to recover your bloom by that time," were his last words, as he gave her his last kiss.

However blooming Rosalind might hope, or intend to be by May, she did not look very blooming in the beginning of April, and though she persisted in asserting that she was quite well, her parents persisted as obstinately in her spending a few days with a distant relative who resided at the other side of the country.

Rosalind coaxed and protested, but it would not do; and she was obliged, against her will, to try the effect of change of air.

CHAPTER VI.

"WELL, papa, I hope I have colour enough to content you now," said Rosalind, on her return.

"I do not see much difference," replied her father, after a short scrutiny.

"Nor I either," said Rosalind, laughing; "so you will please to let me stay quietly at home next time. It is vulgar to have a colour, and makes one look like a country girl."

"I would rather see you with a colour, notwithstanding."

"Oh papa! you never study the fashion.

Some people make a great fuss about others looking ill; but to my judgment, neither Captain nor Mrs. Trevor ever look the better for their daughter's absence," said Rosalind, playfully, as she was sitting alone with her mother the morning after her return.

"We have had something to fret and annoy us, my child; and I am afraid your father is beginning to feel more anxious for your future prospects than is good for his health."

"My future prospects!" repeated Rosalind, colouring. "What do you mean, mamma?"

"Were he to die now, you would be left almost destitute, he says; and my jointure is very small."

"My father die now! Surely you do not think him ill — in danger?" exclaimed the affectionate daughter, turning pale, as she had turned red before.

"Heaven forbid, my dear! but a late unfortunate circumstance has caused him to think more seriously of our situation."

"What unfortunate circumstance my dear mother? you are talking riddles to me."

"I forgot that you were away, and therefore know nothing of what I refer to; and I am so ignorant of business that I fear my explanation will scarcely make it intelligible. When we purchased Ivy Cottage, Mr. Harper, the owner, being an old friend, proposed that, for the accommodation of both, only a part of the purchase-money should be paid at once—the rest when convenient to your father—he paying interest in the mean time. Your father gladly acceded to the proposal, and paid the remaining two thousand pounds about four years since, through Mr. Woolley, who was to obtain a release, or a receipt, or whatever I ought to call it, from Mr. Harper, who was living near him in Yorkshire, and we were told that all had been done as desired; but somehow or other the receipt, or release was never sent to us, Mr. Woolley always saying, year after year, that he was coming down, and would bring it himself;

but this intention was never fulfilled, and as you already know, he died suddenly some months ago. Your father wrote to his executors, who promised to send him this paper, when they could find it, which, unfortunately, they have not yet done; and it is feared that Mr. Woolley must have lost or destroyed it by mistake. Had Mr. Harper lived this would not have signified, he being honorable and friendly, but he is dead also; and his heir-at-law, a grasping attorney, shunned by the respectable of his own profession, and who owes your father a grudge for having defended a poor man against his tyranny, insists that the remaining two thousand pounds has not been paid, and we unhappily have no proof to produce that it has, your father having accidentally destroyed Mr. Woolley's letter stating the payment. Mr. Henry Harper wrote to claim the two thousand pounds whilst you were at Denham, but receiving no further communication in reply to your father's assur-

ance that the money had been paid, we hoped he was satisfied. Judge then of our surprise and alarm, when the day after you left us, down came a writ and bailiffs, and I do not know what besides.

"The abrupt entrance of these men, and their violent language frightened me so much, that I first fainted, and then fell into hysterics, which only increased your father's difficulties. I am not as strong as I used to be—a little overcomes me now."

"And how did it end?" asked Rosalind, anxiously.

"Better than I could have hoped, thanks to young Lennard, who came in at the moment. Your father, irritated by the men's violence, and satisfied of the injustice of the claim, would have resisted the demand, and rather gone to prison than submitted, at least so he said in the heat of the moment; but at last, to save me from further agitation, he consented to pay the money, though declaring that he

would have it tried in a Court of Justice. Our lawyer says, that unless the receipt can be produced, we shall get no redress, though Mr. Henry Harper has pushed the harshness of the law to its utmost extreme, if not beyond. I do not understand the law terms, but I believe this statement is correct, as far as it goes. Now, two thousand pounds is a great deal to us, who have so small an income; and had, with difficulty, saved a few hundreds to go towards purchasing Michael a company. Poor fellow! I fear he must remain a Lieutenant all his life, unless Colonel Ridgeway will assist him. My little fortune of three thousand pounds, as you know, furnished the rest of the purchase-money for Ivy Cottage, so there is not that to look to. Nor is this all; part of the land—the very part on which the house stands—being held on three lives, (to revert to the heirs of Mr. Harper, should all the lives be allowed to run out) should we have to renew one shortly, Mr. Henry Harper, out of

malice, will demand a large sum for the renewal. Mr. Harper more than half engaged to remedy this in his will, and leave your father a legacy besides; but unhappily died intestate."

"This is all very vexatious, my dear mamma, but, mind you, it took place when I was away. Something always happens in my absence, so I shall not leave Ivy Cottage any more. It was lucky that papa had the money to pay the demand, matters might have been worse; and we must console ourselves in that way."

"You are consoling yourself on insufficient grounds, dear child! Your father, as I stated before, has not been able to save one-half that sum, since Michael's commission, and the payment of his debts, exhausted all our ready money."

"Then how was it paid?" asked Rosalind, with a troubled look.

"That good creature, young Lennard, in-

sisted on lending the money; and we could hardly persuade him to take your father's bond for the amount."

"So he paid it," murmured Rosalind mournfully.

"Yes; and in the kindest way imaginable too—we can never be sufficiently grateful. But what is the matter, Rosalind? are you going to faint? you are looking deadly pale."

"Oh, no! I am not going to faint," answered Rosalind, rousing herself. "But how is this money, borrowed from a stranger, ever to be repaid?"

"Ah! there is the difficulty; and that is what frets your father. With our very limited means we can save but little; and that little should go to provide for your comfort hereafter, as your father's pension dies with him, and land is not of as much value as when we purchased Ivy Cottage."

"Oh! never think of me: I can work, teach,

beg, anything hereafter; but let us do what we can to pay Mr. Lennard. I cannot bear to be under such an obligation to a stranger."

"I cannot consider young Lennard as a stranger after his kindness."

"I wish he had been less kind; thrusting himself into our family concerns," answered Rosalind, pettishly. "It was pushing—impertinent."

"Pushing and impertinent to pity and assist your parents, Rosalind? You are unjust and undutiful."

"I own it, dear mother: young Lennard is liberal, and kind-hearted," said Rosalind, with a self-rebuking blush. "But I wish he had not lent the money—or that he could be paid directly."

"The first is done—the last I fear cannot be done; but, since you are so very scrupulous, you can, on coming of age, become your father's creditor for part of the sum, instead of

young Lennard; he may as well pay interest to you as to him."

Rosalind turned away in confusion—her legacy was no longer in her own power;—she had parted with it unknown to her parents—she had lent it to save her brother from a prison and disgrace. If she should be further questioned what could she say? How should she reply with truth, so as not to commit that brother, and reveal his selfish extravagance?

"I did not mean to take your money as our own, but only as a loan," said Mrs. Trevor, judging from Rosalind's silence that she feared to lose her little all. "To replace it, your father proposes to sell our little carriage and pony—get rid of one of our servants; and if need be, dispose of the large meadow, and perhaps a field."

"Sell the little carriage, my dear mother! And then what will become of you, who are not strong enough to walk even to church?

And if the large meadow were gone, what would become of your beautiful cow? Poor Star! I am sure she would not be happy out of her own field;—she comes to the gate to look after you every day. Oh, no! we must not sell the carriage, or the field, at least not yet."

"I do not see how it can well be helped, if we are to pay young Lennard, unless the receipt can be found; but your father has not decided on it yet, so there can be no use in fretting at present—indeed no use in fretting at all. We have enjoyed a long course of blessings, and should not murmur now that it pleases God to send us trials. I once hoped that Mrs. Denham might have assisted us, or at least provided for you: but I begin to fear that she is implacable. It would be such a happiness to be reconciled to her before my death, for I cannot forget the affection of our younger years."

"Hope nothing from Mrs. Denham," observed Rosalind quickly.

"I do not know that, my dear. Did not she show you every attention during your illness? and did not she offer to send her servant with you? And did not she detain Mrs. Sewell so considerately, and give a hundred pounds to provide me with luxuries?" replied the gentle Mrs. Trevor, anxious to excuse her former friend, and wishing still to maintain the reasonableness of those hopes, whose unreasonableness she was nevertheless beginning to see herself, though she would not admit it to others.

"Yes, my dear, kind, forgiving mother; but this was all:—she was attentive, but not affectionate;—her usual manner was cold and formal in the extreme. When near her I always felt as if in contact with an icicle. If she had once a warm and feeling heart, as you maintain, it has become petrified now from

age, or wealth, or suspicion. Once I could almost have loved her; but she desires not the affection of her kind, and will die unloved, as she lives unloving."

"You judge her hardly, as you say she judges others. You went prejudiced against her—I cannot recognise the friend of my youth in your description," said Mrs. Trevor with a sigh.

"Let her act according to your early recollections—let her throw herself into your arms—let her weep for her past estrangement, dear mother; and I will unsay all that I have said."

"I will still hope that such a time may come," observed Mrs. Trevor; but she sighed as she said it, and Rosalind sighed too.

"I wish you would be a little more civil to young Lennard, my dear," remarked Mrs. Trevor breaking a long silence.

"More civil, my dear mother!—I hope I am never rude to any one," answered Rosalind

colouring. "This is the second time I have been so entreated, though the object before was Mrs. Denham."

"Not exactly rude, my dear;—I do not mean that—but you do not talk to him."

"Not talk to him, mamma?—why I talked to him ever so long only yesterday, and asked very politely after his farm and his garden, his horses and dogs, his cows and his poultry, his uncles and aunts; and all his cousins."

"Nonsense, my dear," said Mrs. Trevor half provoked, though utterly unable to suppress a smile. "He is a very amiable, high principled young man."

"And, as Michael says, like most amiable young men is exceedingly stupid. He has nothing to say for himself."

"You can say enough for both."

"Excuse me, mother mine; I will play proxy for no one, especially in talking, having enough to do on my own account in that way."

"Perhaps young Lennard is not very brilliant in conversation—you cannot expect every one to be endowed with wit."

"Wit! young Lennard witty! why he is positively yawny. Just bearable on a bright sunshiny day, when one can watch the motes that dance in the sun-beams, or stroll out among the flowers, instead of being cooped up in a dull room, listening to a stupid discourse; but on a wet day he is beyond endurance. I shall advise Emily Carrington, who has so many suitors, to learn from the almanacks when there is a chance of three consecutive wet days—no difficult matter in this worst of all climates the grumblers say—and invite them all to spend those days with her at the Bustard or the Druid's Head, or some other solitary abode in the centre of Salisbury Plain; and then select whomsoever she has not seen yawn, or found stupid during that period. A capital project!"

"I hope you will propose no such nonsense, Rosalind," said her mother gravely.

"Oh, yes I must, dear mamma; but do not look frightened, there shall be proper chaperons, depend upon that; I am very particular about the proprieties."

"Those men who are the most brilliant in society are rarely amiable companions by the fire-side," remarked Mrs. Trevor still more soberly.

"That is a moral apothegm I know, that one is bound to hear, always assent to, and never act on; but as I only desire a pleasant acquaintance, and not an amiable fire-side companion I wish Mr. Lennard (since having nothing better to do, he will spend so much of his time at Ivy Cottage) were a little more instructive or entertaining. But dear me! it is getting late, and I had better be off for my walk at once," so away went Rosalind through one door, as young Lennard entered at another, thus dexterously escaping a lecture from her

mother, and a meeting with a guest, whose conversation would have afforded her but little more amusement.

But though Rosalind might escape young Lennard once, she could not escape him always; and there he was at Ivy Cottage day after day; sometimes in the morning, sometimes at noon, sometimes at night; and sometimes morning, noon, and night. To day he brought some luxury or delicacy—fruit, flower or early chicken, for Mrs. Trevor—to-morrow he rode over with a new publication for her husband, or daughter, though the latter made a point of not reading, or cutting up the books he brought. Then he wanted to consult Captain Trevor about this, that and the other;—a new horse, or a new species of corn, or something on which it was absolutely requisite that he should have his advice.

Rosalind saw all this with regret, and a vague feeling of alarm came creeping over her, filling her mind with doubts and fears—fears which

she dared not name to her parents, lest she should be asked what she shrank from answering—lest she should hear what she wished not to hear. All that she could do without absolute rudeness she did. She avoided young Lennard as much as possible, heedless of his sigh when she left the room: she was grave and taciturn when he was present, receiving all his little attentions, with a coldness, an indifference that checked a more open display of lover-like feelings, if he entertained any such towards her. Cross to him she could not be, for his attentions to herself were never obtrusive; and his kindness to her parents delicate and unvarying; but grateful to him she dared not be —at least in manner.

There is an old proverb which says that misfortunes never come alone, and so it seemed in the case of the Trevors. The two young farmers (fine, hale, strong young men) on whose lives Ivy Cottage and its surrounding little domain were held, perished in crossing a

dangerous ford on their return at night from a neighbouring fair. Constant companions and friends from childhood, it was supposed that the one who could swim died in the endeavour to save the other who could not, for the swimmer retained in his death grasp the coat of his early playmate.

It was young Lennard who conveyed this painful intelligence to Captain Trevor, hoping to diminish the shock by his cordial offer of any sum that might be required for the substitution of other lives.

Captain Trevor demurred, but the young man was so urgent, pressing his aid with such friendly warmth, yet gentlemanly delicacy, that at last he consented to apply to Mr. Henry Harper, and learn on what terms he would agree to the desired renewal.

Mr. Henry Harper could not legally refuse that renewal, but, the terms being at his option, he made an exorbitant demand—Three hundred pounds on each life.

"It is more than I can, or ought to give; so the property must fall to him on my death," said Captain Trevor after some little consideration.

Against this resolution young Lennard pleaded so energetically, saying that it would distress Mrs. Trevor, who was much attached to Ivy Cottage, and afford a triumph and advantage to the grasping and vindictive heir, that Captain Trevor at length consented to leave the decision open till after the arrival of his son, who was expected shortly, when a family consultation on the subject should take place.

Young Lennard's generous conduct naturally raised him still higher in the estimation of the owner of Ivy Cottage, and his daughter's fears and taciturnity encreased in the like proportion. She was no longer the lively, happy Rosalind of former times, and her parents watched her with growing anxiety. They missed her buoyant step aud merry laugh. She no longer went about the house with a

joyous smile, or light-hearted carol; but her foot fell slowly — heavily; — she uttered no merry jest, and her smile had lost the brightness of other days. It was evident to the eye of affection that some secret grief, or hidden anxiety was wearing her away; yet when questioned, she still persisted that she was well, and still maintained that she should be more blooming in the summer. None guessed how many tears she shed in secret, or how much she felt for young Lennard, whilst she still retained towards him a cold or careless demeanour. Her greatest pleasure appeared to be in taking long and solitary walks and she was just setting off on one of these lonely rambles, when a carriage drove up to the door. Finding little delight in society, (her favorite neighbours all chancing to be absent), she was on the point of slipping away unperceived, when the glimpse of a pretty, girlish face arrested her steps. For a moment she stood leaning against a garden seat, pale and trembling;

then, mastering her emotion by a strong effort, she advanced to meet her guest, and was the next moment clasped in the arms of Susan Way, from whom she had only received one hurried letter since her return from Denham; and of whose subsequent movements and adventures she knew nothing.

"I have so longed for this meeting, Rose," cried her lively young friend. "It is such a time since I have seen you! and yet mamma has made me promise not to remain more than one short half hour. And I have so much, so very much to tell you."

"So I should think, Susan, for it is many months since I have heard any thing of you; and not knowing your direction, I could not write to enquire whether you had or had not the gout in your hand."

"Very true, Rosalind; I am very naughty, I admit; but do not look so grave about it, and I will behave better for the future. The fact is, such strange things have come to pass

that I wished to tell them rather than write them; so come along to the summer house, for I must have you all to myself during my scanty half hour."

"Pray what are the strange things that have come to pass?" asked Rosalind after they were seated, finding that Susan continued silent.

"Oh! very strange things, Rose! so strange that I do not know where to begin, so perhaps I had better jump into the middle at once," replied her blushing friend. "I am go—going to be married in August, and I wish you to be my bridesmaid, as you promised ages ago.—Ah! you may well look surprised," she continued after a pause, for Rosalind said nothing.

"This is why I wished to see you, and hear what you would say. But bless me! how white you look—you quite frighten me. And I think you might congratulate me," she added a little vexed at her friend's silence.

"I do congratulate you most truly; and

wish you every possible happiness," answered Rosalind; but in a tone so slow and measured —that one of more penetration must have discovered that its steadiness was forced. "I have never had my former colour since my attack at Denham; but the heart beats as warmly as ever, Susan;—doubt not that your intelligence has surpised me as much as you could desire, having heard nothing so long of you or Mr. Wyvill, and hence my silence; but be assured yourself, and assure him that no one can more sincerely desire your happiness than Rosalind Trevor."

"I shall not assure Mr. Wyvill of any such thing—he is nothing to me," cried Susan blushing and pouting.

"Mr. Wyvill nothing to you!" exclaimed Rosalind in wonder. "I understood that you were going to be—married."

"So I am—but—but not to Mr. Wyvill."

"Not to Mr. Wyvill!" repeated Rosalind

trembling in every limb. Do you mean that you are going to marry some one else."

"Yes, my dear."

"Impossible! you cannot be so false! so fickle! Having once loved him, you cannot love another. Where is his equal? you are jesting, Susan, I will not believe you."

"Do not look so strange and indignant, dear Rose; you terrify me," said Susan without venturing a second glance at her companion. "It was all stuff and nonsense that I wrote you about Mr. Wyvill;—I did not really love him —it was all fancy, papa and mamma and my brothers all made a fuss about my dancing with him twice in the same evening, and warned me not to think of him, because he was not rich; and I suppose that made me think of him and believe I liked him; but I did not really care for him; indeed I was always half afraid of him though he was very kind to me, he seemed so superior to other men."

"And it is thus that you would pass over your faithlessness, Susan? But however you may excuse it to yourself, how can you excuse it to him? How can you ever forgive yourself for paining that warm and noble heart? How can you ever again know a moment's peace after causing him such bitter pangs? Give up this second engagement, founded on falsehood, and seek by the devotion of a whole life to atone for this cruel wrong to one whose happiness depends on you."

"Give up Harry Marsham!—No, that I won't do, Rosalind, whatever you may say; though you look so strange, and awe me as Mr. Wyvill himself used to do, when hurried away by some burst of enthusiasm, till his eyes flashed like lightning, and his cheek glowed as yours does now. I wish I had told you of my marriage by letter—I should not have minded your writing half as much as your words, which shock and agitate me, as if I had really done Mr. Wyvill some grievous wrong."

"As if you had done him some grievous wrong!—and have you not? Is it nothing to fix your affection upon one, and then for that one to prove unworthy? To love with your whole heart—to feel that your whole being—your very existence is bound up in another, and for that other to prove false and faithless?"

"Dear Rosalind do not talk thus—do not look thus—I cannot bear it. It seems as if you had borne all you describe, and that I had caused you to bear it," said Susan bursting into tears. "I forgot that you were such a romantic high minded person; indeed I thought you had learned the nonsense of all this, as I have done from mixing more with the world."

"I have not learned to be fickle and wring a noble heart, if that is what you mean," cried the indignant Rosalind, her own heart aching at the pangs endured by Wyvill.

"But I have not done any of this," said

said Susan in a deprecating tone. "Mr. Wyvill never loved me."

"He never loved you!" repeated Rosalind, starting back.

"No, indeed, Rose;—it is true—indeed it is, though you will not believe me. But you are paler even than when I first saw you, and clutching so wildly with your hands. You are ill—let me call some one."

"No, no," said Rosalind, detaining her, and mastering her emotion, so as to speak distinctly. "How can you tell me that he does not love you after your letter to me at Denham?"

"Oh! that was all nonsense, as I said before. I fancied that he liked me, the same as I fancied that I liked him, but indeed it was all nothing but fancy; and if my friends had not made a fuss, I should not have been so silly. I have never really loved any one but Henry—he is so merry and good tempered."

"Merry and good tempered!" repeated Rosalind contemptuously. "And do you maintain his superiority to Mr. Wyvill?"

"He is not so grand or dignified as Mr. Wyvill; not but what he could be merry too sometimes, only then at others he was so lofty, talking of things that I could not comprehend, till he was quite awful; now I am never afraid of Henry."

"And what do you say about meeting Mr. Wyvill at Drinkbourne, and fainting in his arms?"

"I do not know what you mean by fainting in Mr. Wyvill's arms," said Susan reddening. "I saw him ride past the window when we were staying at Drinkbourne, but that was all."

"All?" questioned Rosalind sternly.

"Yes, all, Rose—really all. I remember now that you wrote something about our meeting having been observed, which I could

not make out; and intended to ask for an explanation."

"Am I really to believe you? Are you quite certain that Mr. Wyvill was not attached to you?" questioned Rosalind, fixing an earnest gaze upon her face, and hanging anxiously upon her words.

"Quite certain; and as certain that I was never really attached to him. We spent a week together in the same house last autumn, and he met me as a common acquaintance, never paying me any particular attention; and as for me, I never knew when he came into the room; and never cared whether he spoke to me or not."

"Perhaps Henry was by," said Rosalind with a faint smile.

"Yes, he was," replied the blushing Susan.

"And pray how soon after I quitted Denham did you begin to discover that your love for Mr. Wyvill was no love at all?"

"Oh! not till I met Henry. Now don't laugh, Rose; though I would rather have you laugh than look as you did just now."

"There is no pleasing you, Susan. How am I to look?"

"As you used to do in former days; happy and merry, ready to laugh with every body, at every thing. I told Henry that you would jest with him by the hour together; and now I know not what he will say to me—you seem so much altered."

"I am altered, Susan—I am not what I was, and fear I never shall be again. I have been ill—and my mother has been ill—and there are other things pressing upon me; but to please you, I will try to be for the next half hour as I used to be in our girlish days."

"Ah, do! there is a dear, Rose; now I shall know you again. Henry bade me tell you that he was resolved to like you very much; and you must like him too—but that you cannot help."

"Shall I try and cut you out?" asked Rosalind gaily.

"Oh, no! I should not like you as a rival. Besides, is there nothing in proving false and fickle, and wounding a noble heart?—I wish I could remember all your eloquent words that set my heart beating, and my cheeks burning," answered Susan, unable to proceed with the repetition of Rosalind's indignant burst.

"Fairly retorted, Susan! After this, I must for very shame give up all idea of rivalship. I need not ask if your Henry is perfection—of course he cannot be less."

"You are not changed, Rosalind, say what you will; but retain your old merry, provoking ways," replied the blushing Susan.

"How was this wondrous revolution wrought? I must know all about it."

"Not from me, Rosalind; you are in too mischievous a mood for that. If I told you how it all came about, you would do nothing but laugh at me, and Henry too; now I should

not mind your laughing at me—at least not very much—but I might not forgive your laughing at him, so you shall hear none of our love passages; sufficient that it is a very unromantic affair for the heads on both sides are consenting—he is not at all jealous; and we have not performed one single lover's quarrel, and are to be married in August, when your presence is particularly requested."

"It seems likely to be such a commonplace affair that I do not know whether I shall attend or not," said Rosalind laughing.

"I have your promise to be bridesmaid, and Henry shall pay you off for me; I cannot help feeling rather foolish, or you should not go scot free depend upon it now. How I wish I could see you in love, that I might torment you! But I fear there is no hope of that, you being too gay to be sentimental; yet you used to be very romantic too—but then it was a lofty romance, and no one ever did, or ever can come up to your ideas of what heroes and lovers should

be. If Mr. Wyvill were not grown so uncommonly stupid, I should persuade him to take you in hand."

"Is he grown so uncommonly stupid," asked Rosalind carelessly stooping to pick a flower.

"Most dreadfully dull! he must be in love, or debt;—and so Henry says."

"Is your Henry stupid then, since dullness is a consequence of being in love?"

"No, that he is not; but his is successful love."

"And Mr. Wyvill's is not, you think."

"I supppose not, from his being so silent and gloomy."

"May not the death of his father, which I saw in the papers, account for this?"

"It may, though I still think that he is in love."

"We are always apt to think others affected with the same complaint as ourselves," observed Rosalind, archly.

"Out upon you, Rose! for calling love a complaint; at least I do not complain of it. I wanted to talk to Mr. Wyvill about you, but remembering what nonsense I had written, I could not summon courage for the attempt; and people said that something unpleasant had happened at Denham which made the naming it embarrassing, so I held my tongue. That he neither looked well nor happy is certain, though whether love is the cause of his pain I know not. But here is your mother come, and my half hour gone—so adieu. You are not angry with me now for preferring Henry to Mr. Wyvill, are you?"

"Not at all."

"Remember August; and mind you are to like my Henry very much," whispered Susan, with a rosy blush, as after paying her compliments to Mrs. Trevor, she took a last farewell of Rosalind.

"I shall remember both," answered Rosa-

lind, kissing her hand as the carriage drove off.

"She only fancied she loved him, — it could have been only fancy. But how could she love another, after only even thinking that she loved him?" was Rosalind's thought, as she paced a sunny walk after Susan Way's departure; and something of the lofty and indignant air that had at first so awed her friend came over her as she thought it. "Yet it is better as it is—she could not understand him —she is not worthy of him—who is?" she added, trembling at the wild beating of her own heart. "I should not blame Susan for being fickle, and given to change: I might have known that it was her nature—that her affection was only fitted for prosperity. She could not live upon a memory, and keep her maiden faith through years of doubt and difficulty. She has chosen one who is better fitted for her.—He loved her not—and yet she

thinks he loves.—Can it be possible? His words and manner at the Pearsons — that happy! happy evening! And when acting together in the charade — and then again at Balder Cliff:—things that I dared not think of then for fear of proving false to Susan. Oh! that I could tell! that I might believe!" she continued, whilst the rich blood mantled on her cheek. "But the lady at Drinkbourne!" she added, her hands drooping by her side, and the blood retreating to her heart.

"If you please, Miss Rosa, my mistress wants the key of the spice cupboard," said a servant, who had approached unobserved.

A third repetition of the question roused Rosalind to a knowledge of what was required of her, breaking the glittering thread with which she was weaving a golden tissue—a veil of hope and joy, yet across which shot some thin black lines, thrown by a jealous shuttle.

How impertinent seem the concerns of every day life if intruded on us at a moment when fancy holds her fairy rule, and the heart is filled with thoughts above this lower earth!

CHAPTER VIII.

May had come—come as she should come, with her myriad of flowers, and her soft balmy breeze; and yet Rosalind's cheek was not blooming as she had asserted that it would be. The languor which had before appeared to oppress her was no longer so constant—she was now often fitful and restless in mind and body, growing thinner and thinner day by day; at least so thought her parents and young Lennard, though she tried to persuade them to the contrary.

It was the day fixed for her brother's arrival; and she sat at her favorite window, watching for his coming, yet not as it seemed, with the joyous and affectionate anxiety of former days. She had learnt that the pleasure his presence brought her was not always unalloyed:—her affection was still as fond; but not as proud—not as confiding. She began to suspect that he might be selfish—she feared that he might be again in debt. She knew, too, that the decision concerning the renewal waited only his opinion. Should that opinion be in favour of agreeing to Mr. Henry Harper's terms, there would be a still greater debt and obligation to young Lennard—and how were either ever to be repaid? Did he — did her family look to her as the means of repayment? She dared not ask herself the question—the bare idea made her shudder. Even if a new loan were not accepted, how was the old one to be repaid, except by a retrenchment painful

to think of in her mother's still delicate state of health, or by her own hand?

"And yet they wonder that I grow thinner and paler," was her passionate thought, as she looked up suddenly from her work, flinging back by the motion the long curls that had fallen over her pallid face. Her brother was beside her. He had entered at the back of the house, and crept stealthily upon her solitude, undiscovered till his arm was round her.

"You keep a bad watch, Miss Rose, and let the enemy come at noon-day," he exclaimed, kissing her affectionately. "And how comes this? Where are the roses you promised me? May is here, but there is no bloom on your cheek."

"I side with the House of York, not Lancaster," answered his sister, assuming a gaiety she did not feel.

"Ah, rebel! to desert your family banners:—you shall be tried for treason."

"And who shall be my judge?"

"Why, as I am inclined to be merciful, an old friend of yours, Edred Cottrell."

"He shall not be my judge," exclaimed Rosalind resolutely, as her cousin came forward at a sign from Michael.

"There is no need of judge, jury, or trial now, for you are sporting your old colours again—'the red, red rose,'" said her brother marking her embarrassment, as she returned Edred's greeting with a crimson blush. "I thought I should give you a surprise."

"You have indeed."

"Not a painful one I hope, Rosalind," whispered Edred, whilst Michael was embracing his mother, who entered the room at the moment.

Rosalind had not the heart to say yes, his manner was so sad, so pleading, so respectful. She was silent; and her cousin gathered hope from that silence. As Rosalind for fear of being questioned, and in deference to Mrs. Denham's wishes had not hinted her suspicions of Edred

to her parents, they received him with friendly warmth, and seconded Michael's invitation to remain till the morrow; and as much longer as he pleased—an invitation which, to Rosalind's annoyance, was thankfully accepted. She was vexed at his coming—vexed at his staying—and still more vexed at perceiving that he had not abandoned those hopes, the pressing which on her notice had pained her so much at Denham. She could not doubt that he still loved her—there was no mistaking the timid yet earnest manner, so different from his former gay demeanour and merry jesting—the voice that softened when addressing her—the eye that watched her every movement—the mind that anticipated her every wish. She could not but pity him, for she could well understand the pangs of slighted affection:—she even admitted that she had no right to be angry with him, for his attentions, though devoted, were not obtrusive; and yet his presence fretted her; and as she sat in the

evening with Edred on one side, and young Lennard on the other, both striving to win her regard and monopolise her conversation, she felt herself as a bound victim destined to be sacrificed at the altar, and the fear that had pressed so heavily upon her for many weeks grew stronger and stronger till it could hardly be endured. Who was to be the officiating priest, and plunge the dagger into the heart of their victim, time would show.

"I will defer the evil day as long as I can—I will hear nothing—ask nothing," was Rosalind's determination, as she laid her aching head on her pillow and tried to coax herself to sleep. But others too could determine, and plan, and act; so the next morning after breakfast, thanks to a manœuvre of Michael's, she found herself in her favorite summer house with Edred by her side, and no one else within sight or hearing.

"You are changed, Rosalind; greatly changed since we last met, and I cannot tell you how

it grieves me to see it," began her cousin, love and pity imprinted on every feature. "You are not well—you are not happy."

"You are rude this morning cousin Edred; and I will not stay to hear any more uncivil speeches," answered Rosalind forcing a sickly smile.

"Uncivil speeches—Rosalind! unwelcome truths I fear; and yet I utter them in kindness—I speak from pity—from affection. Nay, but you shall hear me," he added, stepping between her and the door, so as to bar her egress.

"Shall, Mr. Cottrell!—that is a despot's word, and I despise it; as yet, I am no slave—not bound to do your bidding. Let me depart!" said Rosalind proudly, yet shivering as she thought that her free agency might soon be lost.

"Forgive me if I spoke too warmly; I come to sue--not to command. Only hear me—hear me patiently; and I will not then detain you against your will."

"You can tell, and I can hear nothing that can benefit either. Let me go!" said Rosalind, but not so proudly or resolutely, for his voice and attitude were humble and respectful, and worn down by mental suffering, she had no longer the power to control herself or others, as in olden times.

"You are mistaken, Rosalind; I may have the power to serve you greatly, and my will you cannot doubt."

"No, no; you cannot serve me; and if you could, such serving would only bind me in a harder bondage.'

"Not so, dear Rosalind; you are unhappy, and I cannot bear to see it. Your cheeks are pale—your eyes are hollow—there is no lightness in your tread—no hope within your heart. And why is this?"

"I am anxious for my mother—anxious for my father."

"And anxious for yourself, dear Rosalind," he added, earnestly. "And I am anxious for

you, too. You are required to sacrifice yourself for the welfare of your family—and you shrink from the trial."

Rosalind said nothing; but a slight shiver shook her frame.

"You see this—you feel this—you have long felt it. It has tamed down your buoyant spirit—haunting you by night, and haunting you by day—leaving your mind no peace—robbing your frame of health. You do not, you cannot love young Lennard."

"Mr. Lennard is amiable and generous; he will not press an unwelcome suit upon me," answered Rosalind, hurriedly, and looking away to hide the impression made by his words.

"Admitting this—though his persevering attentions can scarcely warrant the belief— will your parents be equally generous?"

"They will urge me to nothing that can pain me," said Rosalind with a glow of affection.

"Not by harsh words—they love you far too well for those: but is there not a gentle tyranny more hard to be withstood than angry voice and frowning brow? Do you not feel its power even now?"

"They have said nothing to me on the subject," observed Rosalind, evasively; "and it is too delicate a point for you to meddle with."

"Nay, but I must continue — pardon me. Have they looked nothing? — done nothing? —will you add that, too?—Do they not encourage his visits? Do they not already regard him as a son, incurring debts which can alone be paid by their own beggary, or their daughter's hand? Do they not pray you by those gentle pleading looks, so difficult to be refused from those we love, to save their age from hardships, and your youth from penury?"

"They will listen to my objections, their first thought is my happiness. I should have spoken plainly before," said Rosalind in fal-

tering accents, that touched her hearer, who saw that she was speaking against her own belief, yet trying to believe her own assertions.

"Your silence proves that you dared not speak—that you lingered on in painful doubt, fearing a confirmation still more painful. But supposing your parents to be touched by your tears, which I will not gainsay, will your brother be equally pliable—equally generous? How is his debt to young Lennard to be paid, save by his sister's hand?"

"He owes nothing to young Lennard," answered Rosalind boldly, believing the charge invented for the purpose of bending her to her cousin's will, whatever that will might be.

"He is his debtor for twelve hundred pounds—with other debts beside."

"This is false! I will not credit it!" cried Rosalind warmly, as if hoping by the vehemence of her denial to disprove the assertion.

"You doubt me, Rosalind," said Edred reddening with vexation, at her resolute and rebuking incredulity—"I will not pledge my honor for the fact, since you doubt that honor; but ask yourself if I should be guilty of the folly of asserting that to be true, which one word to Michael would prove to be false? He owes young Lennard twelve hundred pounds—and it may be more."

"I must believe you," said Rosalind with a deep sigh, clinging to a rustic chair for support.

"I thought you knew it, or should not have named it."

"I did not know it. But why tell me of a brother's errors? Is this a fitting theme for a sister's ear? Is this the kindness of which you boasted?"

"It was needful that the sister should hear the tale however painful. She now understands her position—she sees all her danger."

"Yes, I understand it all now—see every

thing that you would have me see. And now that your purpose is accomplished, let me go; I am not what I was—I cannot bear what I once could," she added, passing her thin transparent hand across her aching brow, and putting aside the clustering curls that prevented the air from blowing on it.

"Not what you once were truly. Oh! Rosalind, what must you not have suffered to be so changed!"

It was impossible to doubt his pity, and his cousin was moved, though she made no remark but tottered towards the door.

"One moment more," he said gently detaining her. "My purpose is not accomplished; —to make you aware of the perils of your position without pointing out a way of escape would be the height of cruelty—that way is open before you. Once more I offer the devotion of a heart, that loves you still in spite of your former coldness. Mrs. Denham desires our union, and that union would ensure the

reconciliation for which your mother pines. As I said before, my wealth should be yours—your brother's debts should be paid, and your parents' declining years cheered by the comforts which their age requires. You do not speak, dear Rosalind. May I not read your silence as I wish?—May I not rejoice in the fulfilment of my fondest hopes?" he pleaded, growing more earnest, more impassioned.

"No, Edred, no; it cannot be," said Rosalind gently, but firmly, withdrawing the hand which he would have taken. "You offered this before, and I declined it—you should have understood and not have offered it again; God help you in your sorrow, if you mean me well; and grant you pardon if you mean me ill; and that is all that I can say. Do not follow—do not upbraid me—do not plead;—it would but pain us both, and yet be vain. You say that I am sadly changed:—lay not another sin to your account, by bearing hardly on a breaking heart."

"I would soothe not pain you, Rosalind," said Edred with much feeling, walking beside her as she paced slowly up the gravel path that led towards the house. "Do not reject my aid—my love. Think of the only other alternative. To save your father and brother from a prison—to supply your mother even with needful food you must wed young Lennard."

"It may be so," replied Rosalind sadly, still walking on, though her trembling limbs could scarcely support her frame.

"It must be so—there are no means of escape."

"There is death!" said his cousin abruptly with a wild light in her sunken eye, that alarmed her hearer.

"Death! surely, Rosalind, you cannot contemplate!"—he began, then checked himself ere he had given words to the fearful doubt.

A scornful smile curled Rosalind's lip, immediately succeeded by a look of the most touching resignation.

"My life is in the hands of Him who gave it. Let him resume it—let him prolong it—still may I say His will be done! But life has lost it charms; and I would lay it down with joy if it so pleased my Maker."

Edred turned away to conceal his emotion; but that emotion was unheeded by Rosalind, who still slowly pursued her way to the house with her eyes bent on the ground.

"And you prefer death to a union with me?" he questioned in a faltering voice.

"I do."

"And you would wed young Lennard rather than Edred Cottrell?" he demanded with a frantic vehemence, which he had not before exhibited.

"If it must be so; but I would rather be in my grave than wed with either."

"Talk not of dying, Rosalind; reprove me—hate me—pour out reproaches on my head, but speak not—look not thus!" he exclaimed, giving way to the excitement which he had

before struggled to subdue. "Weep—sob—any thing, but that settled, tearless sorrow."

"It is too late for tears—they are all shed; and I would part in peace, for we may never meet again."

"Yes, yes, we will have many happy meetings," answered Edred striving to speak more gaily, yet shuddering at her words, which to his ears, sounded prophetic. "You are ill—you must have advice—I will speak to your mother—she shall take you to town."

"And who will supply the means for this?" asked Rosalind bitterly.

Her cousin turned away—his heart smote him for his selfish cruelty—and yet his purpose changed not. Remorse is not repentance—nor self-condemnation self-amendment.

"I will supply the means. At least receive health at my hands," he exclaimed again turning towards her.

For a moment she looked steadily in his face,

then shook her head with a mournful gesture of disappointment.

"Health! can the frame gain health when the heart is breaking? No, Edred, no; I will take nothing at your hands—not even the food that would save me from dying;—you can show no kindness without the hope of a reward. This is your doing—this is your work—and so you will feel at your last hour. Your wiles have succeeded—your falsehood has prospered. It would be vain to appeal to your pity—you can only be moved by self-interest—Mrs. Denham's heir will have wealth but no joy. The deceiver—the slanderer—the perjurer can know no peace on earth—and for a future life—God grant him penitence!"

So saying Rosalind passed into the house, but Edred remained where she had left him, pale, silent, motionless; his eyes fixed on the spot where she had stood—his mind still under the influence of her solemn words. It was an

awful sight to see a bold, strong man so moved by the speech of a weak, simple girl. His ghastly look—his trembling limbs, proclaimed the force of truth.

Within an honr he was on his way from Ivy Cottage to Denham Park, with the words of that simple girl still ringing in his ears, though he had so far mastered his emotion as to take a quiet leave of the Trevors; — all except Rosalind, who, pleading a head-ache in excuse, had not descended to bid him farewell. None guessed the tumult in his mind—the agony that wrung his heart.

It was some days before Rosalind was well enough to leave the house. She had been suffering from a severe cold, her mother said and thought—that mother did not know that her child had never closed her eyes on the night after Edred's departure; but had sat at the open window to cool her feverish brow, panting, gasping for breath, with her hands

clasped, and her tearless eyes fixed on the starry sky.

"I shall drive you out to day, Rosalind; it will do you good," said her father.

"But then you must drive out mamma, too," answered his daughter.

Any thing to avoid a *tête-à-tête* with any one of her family!—there was safety in numbers—for once even she rejoiced in young Lennard's presence, who came to dine, according to custom, when not otherwise engaged;—she could not be questioned when he was by. And yet she loved her family, and they loved her; but it was that very affection which made her trial all the harder. How could she refuse her consent to what would place them in comfort? Yet how could she stand before the altar with one whom she did not love—and that too, when the mere naming of another had power to make her tremble?

She was better for the drive, as her father

had predicted--still better for a second on the morrow, and lured to linger in the open air by the beauty of the day, instead of entering the house on her return, she strolled into the garden, and thence into the little shrubbery beyond, where she seated herself on a bench beneath a spreading beech, believing that Michael was out riding, and no one near to disturb her solitude. She was mistaken:—she had not been there many minutes before her brother took his place beside her.

"You are mending apace, Rose," he observed, affectionately.

"Yes; but I must be prudent, and not remain out too long, lest I catch cold again," she replied, rising as she spoke with the intention of returning to the house: not that she really feared the damp—but only the being alone with him.

"Fiddle-de-dee, Rose; you would not catch cold if you sat here for hours," cried Michael, passing his arm round her waist, and thus de-

taining her. "I want to have a talk with you."

"I am not equal to a talk, Michael; I am not, indeed," said his trembling, frightened sister.

"It need not be a long one, dear Rose, but I must say what I have to say, having already waited several days for an opportunity. That Harper is a villain there can be no doubt, though it would be impolitic to tell him so; but nevertheless we must decide about this plaguy renewal, and the decision, it seems, must rest with you."

"It cannot rest with me—I know nothing of business."

"This is a matter of feeling rather than business."

"The renewal of lives in a copyhold a matter of feeling! You have strange fancies in some things; but feeling, or business I am not equal to the discussion at present."

"You are not equal to much, Rose, that I

can see plainly. We are all anxious on your account. What say you to a foreign trip, to give you strength and roses?"

"It would be useless to give an opinion on what cannot be accomplished;" she answered gravely, wondering at his remark.

"But it can be accomplished very comfortably; and I can either stay and nurse my mother, or go and help nurse you."

"I do not understand you," said his sister, in surprise.

"Then you must be very dull of comprehension, or would have me suppose so. Why should not your wedding tour be to Italy?"

"I am not going to be married—I shall never marry," exclaimed poor Rosalind, with uncontrollable emotion.

"I understand — that is a girl's proper answer."

"It is a woman's resolution," observed his sister reproachfully.

"A woman's resolution, if you prefer it.

And how long does a woman's resolution last? Love will soon win a different reply:—I must send Lennard to plead his own cause."

"I will hold no conversation with Mr. Lennard on the subject."

"Then you must hold it with me," said her brother, again detaining her beside him against her will. "He has waited patiently for months, thankful to win a gracious word or smile, but he cannot be expected to wait much longer. He deserves better at your hands than to be kept in suspense."

"I have no wish to keep Mr. Lennard in suspense—I have no wish to influence his actions in any way—he is your friend, not mine."

"There was a time when Michael Trevor's friends would have been his sister's also; but Rosalind can change as others."

"There was a time when Rosalind Trevor was dear to her brother, and that brother would say nothing to pain her."

"Rosalind is still dear, very dear to her brother; and therefore it is that he would secure her happiness by uniting her to one worthy of her regard, and devotedly attached to her. It is time that Lennard should be received as an accepted lover—his probation has been long enough."

Rosalind shook, and gasped for breath; then summoning all her firmness, answered her brother with a tolerably steady voice.

"If you speak thus at Mr. Lennard's desire, say that esteem for his many virtues is the warmest feeling that I can ever entertain towards him; and of this the coldness with which I have ever received his attentions should have convinced him. Nor can I say much for the delicacy of the terms employed, if you repeat his words correctly."

"Psha! Rosalind; the words are my own—you must know that Lennard is too humble and devoted to say any thing that conld anger

you; so give me a pretty message—he deserves it from your lips."

"Say to him what I have said—I can give no other answer."

"I shall say no such thing, Rose, and you must give him another answer:—he has received too much encouragement to be fooled or jilted in this way."

"He has received no encouragement from me," answered Rosalind, hurriedly, no longer able to conceal or control her emotion.

She felt that this conversation would decide her fate—she had little hope that this fate would be other than she feared; and yet she sought, with almost childish eagerness, to defer the dreaded decision.

"He has been here, day after day, for months; and you never told him that his visits were disagreeable to you," replied her brother warmly.

"He never said, or even hinted that those visits were to me."

"And you never suspected it, my most innocent sister; but concluded he rode over here daily to see Captain and Mrs. Trevor—an old married couple."

"It would have been indelicate to speak out on a mere suspicion; but I ever gave him a cold reception."

"Then you did him a great wrong, for he deserved a warm one," observed her brother, changing the ground of his charge, and making no attempt to conceal his vexation at her replies.

She offered no defence against this new accusation, and Michael, after remaining silent for some minutes, broke out abruptly.

"It is of no use mincing matters, Rose: Lennard seeks your hand with the full approbation of all your family; and I have told him that he need not despair."

"I cannot wed young Lennard," — said Rosalind, in a hollow voice, turning very pale.

"And why not? You did not choose to have Cottrell, though I gave him a chance, thinking that you might prefer him, notwithstanding what you said before; for there is no comprehending what you women mean. You have not a fancy for Ridgeway after all have you?"

"No."

"Very well then, Lennard is the man. Young, honorable, rich, and generous."

"He is all this—yet I cannot love him," said Rosalind, timidly.

"Pooh, child, you will love him enough in time."

"Never!" exclaimed Rosalind, vehemently.

"Come, come, Rose, don't talk nonsense. Why there is no contenting you. Two of the best matches in the county at your command, yet you will have neither of them. If the Admirable Crichton himself were to sue for your hand, I verily believe that you would say

him nay. I am sick of such fancies. What more can you require in a lover?"

"I require nothing but to be freed from unwelcome suitors."

"Suitors you must have—your beauty, and winning manners will always ensure them."

"Beauty! I wish I had but one eye, half a nose, and no mouth," exclaimed poor Rosalind, with a tinge of the wild gaiety of former days. "Then I might be allowed to remain as I am, which is all I ask," she added, mournfully.

"Most probably; I doubt any one's wooing you then," answered her brother with a half smile. "But having a pair of very beautiful eyes, a well shaped nose, and a very pretty mouth, with wit, grace, and excellence, you must submit to woman's fate; and not only be wooed—but won."

"At least I am so far a free agent that I may choose my master," observed Rosalind, a little bitterly, hurt at her brother's manner.

"As for the matter of free agency, Rose—

women, aye, and men too, must bend to circumstances."

"I would make circumstances bend to me," said Rosalind, proudly.

"Do so, my lofty sister. Pay off my father's debt to Lennard—furnish money for the renewal by the mere force of your will, and then you may be free to choose."

"Should I be quite free even then?" she questioned.

He turned away from her keen gaze—then spoke abruptly as he had done before.

"This is sheer folly, Rosalind; the debt to Lennard must be paid."

"I have no means to pay it—the little all I had my brother has—he took my money, yet he shows no pity."

"Do you reproach me with being your debtor?"

"No, Michael, no, I would not reproach you; but spare me—spare me—urge me not to a union that must make me miserable"—ex-

claimed the wretched Rosalind, changing her tone of reproof to one of passionate entreaty.

"I only urge you for your own good," said her brother, more gently. "Knowing the pains and penalties of poverty, I would fain save you from their endurance. You cannot dislike Lennard—it is impossible to do that:—nay, you admit his worth, and esteem soon ripens into love. Refuse him, and not only the elegances of life, but even the comforts to which your parents have been accustomed must be retrenched to repay the loan already made; and at my father's death you and my mother will be beggars. And how will you bear to see them enduring these privations—privations so painful at their age—and know that it is your doing? Accept him, and our parents will live in peace, blessing their daughter as the means, for Lennard, with his love and fortune, will think nothing of the petty sum of two thousand pounds lent to his wife's father."

"Nor of the twelve hundred lent to his wife's brother?"

"I know not who told you of this loan; but since you throw it in my teeth, I shall not scruple to use it as an argument against you," replied her brother, reddening to the very roots of his hair with shame and anger. "I owe Lennard twelve hundred pounds as you say, and have no means of repaying him, but by the sale of my commission. This villainous claim of Harper's has taken all the little money that my father's strict economy had enabled him to save; Colonel Ridgeway, prejudiced by illnatured reports, will not exert his interest to procure my promotion; and to borrow more of Lennard, save in the character of your husband, is impossible. On your decision therefore rests my fate:—it is for you to say whether I shall become disgraced, dishonored—perhaps the inmate of a prison—or whether I may yet stand a chance of redeeming my fallen fortunes."

"Oh! Michael how could you, knowing our

poverty, and after your promises, bring yourself and all who love you into such painful straits?" exclaimed the agitated Rosalind, clasping her hands in agony.

"It is of no use to talk of the past, Rose; it is done—and it cannot be undone. As I told you before, I was not cut out for a poor man—it is not my vocation. Besides, it is partly owing to yourself; you were so reluctant to lend me your legacy that I tried to win the money at play; but my usual ill luck pursued me, and I lost considerably."

"Thank Heaven that it was so, Michael! The gains of a gambler bring shame and not profit. So it seems all the blame is mine—and I must pay all the penalty," said his sister reproachfully.

"If so thankful that I lost, you should be more willing to assist in paying my debts; and, in truth, it is no such great thing I ask of you—no such unheard of hardship to marry a rich and amiable young man, who worships the

veriest trifle that you have touched, or looked upon."

"Is it nothing to go to a husband's arms not only a beggar—but a debtor?" demanded his sister with a burst of indignation, at his ungenerous and worldly arguments. "And that this should be done by my brother—my only brother whom I loved so well! Is it nothing to be bartered against my will for gold? Sold—literally sold to provide for a brother's—" she paused abruptly.

"A brother's what? Speak it out boldly, Rosalind—pay no heed to my feelings," said her brother bitterly.

"No, Michael; I will say nothing unkind—think nothing unkind if I can help it. But do not urge me too far—you cannot tell—you cannot guess how wild the thoughts that come at times across my brain. Mrs. Denham was right when she warned me that I should be sacrificed for the good of others; and that a brother's hand would bind me to the altar."

"She had the penetration to foresee, but not the benevolence to prevent the wrong. She is a covetous, prosy, selfish old woman," cried Michael in wrath; "but you, Rosalind—you were once kind, gentle, and loving," he added more softly.

"I am still all these, dear Michael; but it is cruel to oppress the loving and the gentle with so hard a burden."

"Do not call me cruel, dear sister. What can I do?" said Michael affectionately, subdued by her appeal. "I know that I have been wrong—very wrong;—I cannot withstand temptation—I never could;—you have a right to reproach me—yet do not think me unkind. What do I ask? Not one iota more than I would do myself. I would marry Miss Verrender to-morrow, if she would have me; and yet I have no particular love for her, and she is not half as amiable as Lennard. A plague on the scandal mongers, who made her believe

me an inveterate gambler. You should not accuse me of cruelty in only urging on you what I would readily do myself."

"The world has changed you, Michael. There was a time when you had higher, nobler thoughts."

"I have grown more reasonable, Rosalind," replied her brother, colouring at her rebuke, though uttered in a gentle tone that had more of sadness than reproof. "Those who live at Rome must do as the Romans do; and those who live in the world must do as the world does;—it is of no use for one person to try to stem the current, so take my advice and do not attempt it; you would only be borne down in the flood and drowned."

Rosalind sighed—sighed for her own fate, and her brother's change. They were no longer one in heart and mind, as they had been in their young days. The taint of the world—the blight of selfishness was on him:

she might endeavour to close her eyes and heart against the conviction, but his conduct would force the painful truth upon her."

"Do not sigh so sadly, Rose; and do not look so ghastly. You cannot think how you shock me," said Michael, drawing her closer to him.

"If you would not be shocked still more save me—spare me,"—pleaded the wretched girl, looking earnestly into his face.

"I would do any thing—try any thing, Rose, to save you pain—to make you happy. You know if I had wealth, how fully, how freely you should share it."

"Yes, dear Michael, I am sure of that," said his sister, warmly.

"But, alas! I have no wealth to share with you, dear Rosalind, I need not repeat all that I said before—you know how matters stand. Comfort for all, and our blessings upon you for giving it; or pinching poverty—perhaps a gaol for my father and mother; and a prison and disgrace for myself. Can you hesitate, Rosalind?"

"Mr. Lennard would never put either of you in prison," said Rosalind, with a wild hurry in her manner.

"Perhaps not; but we should still be his debtors. The very crusts that kept us from starving would be a robbery of our liberal creditor. Is it honourable—is it magnanimous to turn his generosity against himself?"

"It would be an ill return for that generosity to give him a hand without a heart," said Rosalind in a hollow whisper.

"But the heart would soon follow the hand; —you love no other, or I would not urge you thus."

Michael felt his sister shudder in his arms, but she made no remark, and he proceeded. "Besides, you are yourself his debtor, Rosalind. He advanced the money on your note, and would have paid thousands instead of hundreds had I asked it, only to possess the words your hand had traced."

"And could you let this be? Had you no

care for your sister's fame and delicacy? I had a brother once, and he would not have done this thing. He was high-minded and affectionate, and would have perished rather than give a stranger reason to talk lightly of his sister; but that brother went into the world, and there learnt to love the things of the world far better than his only sister. I have no brother now to cherish and protect me."

"Hush! hush! for heaven's sake, speak not so sadly, so reproachfully," exclaimed her brother, with a faltering voice, twining his arm more fondly round her. "I love you still with all a brother's true affection — I would protect you with my life from insult and from wrong:—and Lennard—he would do the like, or more. Think lightly of you for the note! he said that you were more than woman, bidding me not tell who lent the money, lest you should feel distressed. He is as generous and high-minded, as you believe me to be mean and selfish."

"Not mean and selfish Michael—I did not say so—did I?"

"No, but you thought it; and I deserve that you should think it. Alas! for my fatal extravagance, which compels me to urge you against your will. But set my debts aside—forget that you have a brother, still you have parents. Will you condemn them to a prison, or to penury, when one little word will save them this, and bless your brother's generous friend? Can you do this? The question rests with you—the time is come for your decision?"

"Is there no other course?" gasped the weeping girl, clasping her hands, and gazing into his face with a look of passionate entreaty."

"None, Rosalind, none," said her brother, sadly and slowly, turning away that he might not see her agony, yet pressing her closer to his heart as he spoke.

The unclasped hands drooped by her side—

the pallid face sank on his shoulder—a cold moisture came on her noble brow—her lips moved, but no sound was heard.

This silence is fearful, Rosalind. Speak, I entreat you," said her brother after a while, in a husky voice, but with a still averted head.

"Give me time," gasped the shuddering girl.

"Yes, dearest, any time you wish: days, weeks, months, nay, even years, if you desire it. All shall be as you will," exclaimed her brother, in the flow of his gratitude for her compliance, limited as it was, imprinting a kiss on her marble brow, but starting at its deathlike coldness. "Bless you, sweetest, best of sisters! Heaven bless and reward you! you have saved me from despair—you have made me feel how utterly unworthy I am of all your goodness. Receive my thanks—my unbounded thanks."

"I prayed for time—I must first speak to Mr. Lennard," faltered Rosalind, shivering as

she felt that he considered her consent to have been given, and shrinking against her will from his affectionate caresses, and fervent gratitude.

"Yes, dearest; you shall have fitting time —depend on that; you shall say what you will to Lennard. Forgive me for having caused you pain; and now let us talk of other things. It would shock my mother to see you thus—it is very dreadful:—compose yourself. I thought you stronger—firmer."

"I am but a poor thing now—I mean to be better by and bye," said Rosalind, withdrawing from her brother's encircling arms, that he might not feel how she shook, and resting for support against the arm of the garden seat with her bowed face leaning on her hand. "Speak no more of this now—talk of other things—things that will have no power to move me."

She was too faint at the moment to bid him leave her—too weak to return to the house without needlessly alarming her mother.

Michael obeyed her, talking on general subjects till she became sufficiently composed not only to understand what he said, but occasionally to ask a question.

"By the way, Rose, I do not think I have told you of my having seen most of our cousins since we last parted, so I will give you a full, true, and particular account of all their doings, and misdoings. Maria Weston, having played off the baronet against the earl with her small skill, has succeeded in piquing his gouty lordship into making a proposal, which having been joyfully accepted, the beauteous Maria is to become, within a month, the Countess of Dunster; a coronet and handsome jointure outweighing in her mind, that is if she has a mind, the torment of nursing a lump of ill-temper, gout, and flannel. To vex Mrs. Weston, I flirted furiously with the bride elect in the presence of her intended, who looked as black as the *eau medecinale* itself, and ended by promising a pair of cupids for a wedding

gift. To the meddling of this lady I attribute Miss Verrender's coolness, so I owed her a little spite. On Wednesday next, Mr. Terry Weston is to bestow himself, pet stock, and favorite whiskers, on his reputed city heiress—I say reputed, for it turns out that her fortune is only moderate, but he is too far committed to get out of the scrape, the young lady having uncles who are good shots. Richard is gone down into the West to keep a subscription pack of hounds, an office fitting his talents, for he is a good sportsman; and your favorite Anne, who is amazingly improved in appearance, and promises to be tolerably pretty one of these days, is going to Italy with her aunt, to her great delight as you may imagine. She sent a thousand loves, which I ought to have delivered long ago. As to the Baileys, they are much as they were; but there is a report that, if she should not receive a better offer in the course of the season, the youngest will condescend to accept the hand of Timothy

Grubbles Esq., junior partner of the well known and long established house of Trucleton, Saveall, and Grubbles, or some such names. Cottrell you have seen, therefore I need not report of him, so here ends my bulletin of all our very affectionate cousins, who formed items of the family party at Denham Park. Oh, no! I have forgotten one whom I met in the north at my friend Worralls, Rupert Wyvill to wit, with whom you used to have such sharp encounters when present, though you defended him furiously behind his back."

"Is he well?" asked Rosalind in a low voice, shading her face more completely with her hand.

"As the Americans say—he is a sort of so; and a sort of not so. I really do not know what answer to give. He had neither the influenza nor the typhus, but seemed suffering from a sort of mental ague—alternate fits of listlessness, and over activity—as if he thought, till he dared think no more, and then rushed

into action as a relief from painful reveries. I doubt if he has ever quite got over that horrid trial, being so sensitive in points of honor; and though none of his friends believe the verdict a just one, he declares that nothing shall induce him to sell another horse till he shall have proved the perjury of the witnesses."

"Has he any chance of proving that?"

"Not that I know of, but his mind is set upon it; and I believe the verdict weighs on his spirits, poor fellow, though the young ladies in the north attributed his occasional dreaminess to his being in love, as he was perfectly invulnerable to all their charms, a charge substantiated, some asserted by a faded rose having been found by some prying damsel in his desk, folded in silver paper. However his being or not being in love is nothing to you, or me; he is an honorable fellow, despite the jury at C—. and can be very agreeable when he does not assume the

office of lecturer, like a certain Rosalind Trevor of my acquaintance."

"Did he lecture you then?" asked Rosalind in some surprise.

"That did he; and I will do him the justice to say that had I followed his advice I should have been a richer man, for his opinion of some of Cottrell's acquaintances was quite correct; they did me out of my money, as he said they would. Poor fellow! I wish he were better off, for eight hundred a year is but a poor pittance; and as for keeping a wife on it—that is out of the question."

"My father's income is less," said Rosalind timidly.

"And you see what has come of it."

Rosalind was silent, she did not hint that no income could stand an extravagant son, and Michael went on.

"We, that is Cottrell and myself, for as I said before, you always defended Wyvill behind his back, used to exclaim at his stingi-

ness, and want of affection towards his father, wondering how he spent all his allowance, which was reputed to be so handsome, but the truth has come out since the old man's death; and instead of being a mean spirited miser and undutiful son, he is proved to have been most liberal and dutiful, stinting only himself, and bearing all kinds of accusations rather than clear his own fame by criminating a parent. It appears that old Wyvill was one of the most selfish, plausible, and vindictive wretches that ever lived, though maintaining a good character in the eyes of the world. Some few years after his marriage with Wyvill's mother, he succeeded, under an assumed name, in persuading a young lady of respectable connections to elope with him from her uncle's house. On learning from himself, in a moment of anger, soon after the birth of a girl, that she was not his lawful wife, a former one being still alive, shocked at her involuntary crime, she quitted him immediately, which so enraged

him, that he left her and her baby to perish for want, which they would probably have done, but for the kindness of a distant relative to whom she applied at the time, and the subsequent assistance afforded by Rupert, who, chancing to learn her story, supported her and her daughter out of his own allowance, finding it useless to appeal in their behalf to his father. The young lady at Drinkbourne, seen by Cottrell, was this half-sister, who was at the moment loading him with thanks for having smoothed some difficulties, which had hitherto prevented her marriage with a young man to whom she was much attached, and to whom she has since been united. There is a romantic tale, suited to your taste! Few men would have acted thus, bearing blame, suspicions, and many deprivations to shield an unfeeling father from the world's reproaches. Accident revealed the truth, and placed his character in its true light. I wonder you did not discover that he was such a hero of

romance, and fall in love with him; but it is much better as it is, since he has not enough to marry on, for his very worthy father it turns out has been living on principal—not principle mind you—and interest too."

"I hear his step! take him away! you promised that I should not see him yet," cried Rosalind, looking up with so wild an expression that her brother trembled for her reason.

"I will lead him away—he shall not appear before you, till you desire his presence: trust to me for that. But for heaven's sake calm yourself," he replied, kissing her cheek with a brother's fond affection, ere he rose to stay the steps of young Lennard, who was coming along the path towards them.

Rosalind listened pale and breathless, till she heard the steps of her brother and lover die away in the distance, then sinking back on the garden seat, her thoughts returned to the subject from which they had been drawn by

her fear of meeting young Lennard—but the chain of those thoughts was broken.

"Noble, generous, Wyvill! so disinterested, so self-denying! The lady at Drinkbourne—his half-sister. A faded rose carefully kept:—he said he would keep the one I gave when he rode beneath the window. Can this be it? And if it be—what then?—It is too late."

CHAPTER VIII.

Thanks to her brother's care, not only was Rosalind spared an interview with youug Lennard that evening, but, pleading fatigue, she experienced no opposition to her wish of keeping her room for the remainder of the day, in perfect solitude; and when Michael knocked at her door in the morning to enquire how she was, the voice in which she assured him of her being better was sufficiently cheerful to lessen, if it did not remove his anxiety; but her appearance on entering the breakfast room

did not bear out her words, though she tried to smile and seem strong and happy.

Shocked beyond measure at marking in his sister's languid step, and hollow eyes, the effect of the preceding day's conversation, Michael heaped her plate from every dish at table, till poor Rosalind, though appreciating his kind intentions, was obliged to remonstrate, assuring him with a sickly smile and painful attempt at playfulness that she could not, even to please him, be so vulgar as to turn beef-eater.

The parents looked at their child, and then at each other, till sigh echoed sigh, whilst Michael turned away to the window under the pretence of looking out at a strange bird, but in reality to conceal the tears that filled his eyes.

With all his worldly notions—with all his thoughtless extravagance, and we might add consequent selfishness, he was still fondly attached to his sister, and had any other fea-

sible plan presented itself to free himself and parents from penury, he would immediately have relinquished all idea of pressing her union with young Lennard; though utterly unable to understand her repugnance to what all might consider a desirable match, supposing her, as he did, to have no attachment to another. Nay, a vague notion came into his mind of giving up this much desired union, appealing to young Lennard's generosity, selling his commission, and going to Australia, or doing something else; but as yet it was only a vague notion, not a fixed resolution; so poor Rosalind was still doomed to become an unwilling bride.

Before the conclusion of breakfast a note was delivered to Rosalind from Mrs. Philips, a lady residing about three miles off, and who, with her husband, a cousin of young Lennard's, had been abroad for many months.

"Dear Mrs. Philips; I am so glad that she has returned," cried Rosalind with more plea-

sure than she had shown for many months, impatiently breaking the seal, and handing the note after a hasty perusal to her father, who sat beside her.

"The Philipses returned three days ago, and young Lennard dined there yesterday; but I forgot to tell you," said Michael.

"What does she say?" asked Mrs. Trevor.

"A thousand pretty things, my dear, after the manner of women," replied her husband, reading what might be termed the head of the note, according to a habit of his.

"Only just returned—grieved to hear that you and your mother have been ill—very anxious to see you—particular reasons for coaxing you to dine and sleep at the Mount to-day—will not hear of a refusal—send the carriage at two, and send you back to-morrow, if I cannot persuade you to stay longer—Love to your mother, &c. &c."

"Her dear Rosalind had better stay quietly at home—that is my opinion; she overdid it

yesterday, lingering so long in the garden," said Captain Trevor looking anxiously at his daughter.

"But it is so long since I have seen her;—and she is such an old friend—and I can be as quiet there as I like," pleaded Rosalind with a flush that gave her for the moment the appearance of amended health."

"I side with Rosalind, holding that whatever an invalid fancies must be good for her," interposed Michael, anxious to please his sister.

"The drive is short, and the little change may be of service," observed Mrs. Trevor, differing for once from her husband.

"I am in a minority I see; so must yield with a good grace," said Captain Trevor smiling.

"What can she mean by a particular reason?" asked Mrs. Trevor.

"I suppose she has some foreign curiosities to show me that are to be sent away," answered her daughter.

"Mr. Philips is Lennard's cousin—this wish to go looks well," was Michael's thought.

And what was Rosalind's thought? Perhaps it was nothing so marked as a thought, merely a fancy—the restless longing for change usually attendant on suffering.

She should be spared for some hours the consciousness that all around were watching her every movement with anxious affection, comparing what she had been with what she was; and then there was a vague, undefined idea, which she could not have embodied in speech, that somehow or other, she could not tell how, her old friend Mrs. Philips would be able to aid her.

"You are a good child to come at my bidding," said Mrs. Philips embracing Rosalind.

"None of your palaver, my lady; Rosalind Trevor does not care a sixpence for you, and is only come to see me," said her good humoured husband, giving his young guest such a hearty

shake of the hand that she could scarcely forbear crying out.

"Come to see you indeed. No, such thing, Mr. Philips!" replied Rosalind with a playful toss of the head. "I am come to see the lion to which your wife promised to introduce me, if I would pay her a visit."

"Here is the promised lion," said Mrs. Philips, pointing to Mrs. Denham. The startled Rosalind coloured, turned pale, and became embarrassed; but almost instantly resumed her self-possession on Mrs. Denham's addressing her with her usual coldness and formality. She expressed no pleasure at meeting her, no regret at hearing that she had been ill; and above all, made not one single enquiry after her parents.

"I wish I had stayed at home," thought Rosalind.

"Now, my dear, come and tell me all about yourself and your father and mother, before

any one comes to interrupt us;" said the friendly Mrs. Philips, seating Rosalind between herself and Mrs. Denham.

Her many kind enquiries were scarcely answered ere the door opened and young Lennard entered, much to Rosalind's annoyance. She had accepted Mrs. Philips's invitation partly to avoid him, yet here he was: and so eager and tender in his enquiries after her health that Rosalind felt herself crimson at his address, whilst the consciousness that Mrs. Denham's eyes were fixed upon her increased her confusion so much, that she could scarcely command herself sufficiently to give coherent answers to his queries.

"Ah, George! what you here, playing the pretty to Miss Trevor?" exclaimed Mr. Philips, with a sly look at Rosalind, coming into the room a short time after with an elderly gentleman, who was staying in the house. "I am going to show Treson the farm, but I sup-

pose it will be useless to ask you to leave the ladies."

"Quite useless: I am too happy where I am," replied young Lennard, settling himself with great satisfaction in the seat which he had secured next Rosalind.

"I have brought home some additions to my conservatory; come and pronounce judgment on them," said Mrs. Philips.

Rosalind rose with alacrity, glad to escape from so close a proximity to young Lennard, and the whole party proceeded to inspect and criticise the foreign treasures.

"What a beautiful passion flower!" cried Rosalind, supposing her hostess to be beside her at that moment, as she had been some few moments prior; but Mrs. Philips was at the other end of the conservatory with Mrs. Denham, and young Lennard alone was near. Before she guessed his purpose he had gathered the flower and presented it to her with an

empressement that, situated as they were, was painful to Rosalind.

"I am very sorry that you should have given yourself so much trouble," she observed drawing back.

"Will you not receive even this poor flower from me? I had thought—I had ventured to hope"—began young Lennard with a faltering voice, after a moment's pause of surprise and disappointment at her rejection of his offering.

Rosalind longed to say—think nothing—hope nothing; but the remembrance of her father's debt restrained her; and she only hurried away to rejoin Mrs. Philips, trying to look as if she had not heard him. To have accepted the flower, presented with such a manner, would have been a tacit acceptance of his suit: and though painfully conscious that it must come to that at last, she still shrank with dread from any act or word that should bind her past recall.

"You are not the Rosalind Trevor that you were when I went abroad; so come and sit down by me that I may question you as to those once bright eyes looking so dull and hollow. You had a little flush on your first arrival which concealed the ravages of sickness, or sorrow," said Mrs. Philips on re-entering the drawing-room after dinner.

"Do not submit to this threatened cross-examination, Miss Trevor, but come to the library and aid me in hunting for a book," observed Mrs. Denham.

"That will be the more profitable employment, so you may count on my services; I could never abide being questioned," answered Rosalind with an attempt at playfulness, surprised at Mrs. Denham's proposition, yet hoping little good from her acquiescence, so coldly was the proposal uttered.

"What book shall I seek?" asked Rosalind, finding that Mrs. Denham continued silent, looking out of one of the library windows.

"I would read your heart, Rosalind;—that is the book which I would have laid open before me," replied Mrs. Denham abruptly, fronting her young companion as she spoke.

"Its history would be a sad one; and to you uninteresting," answered the startled girl.

"You are mistaken;—it would be interesting—most interesting."

Rosalind gazed in growing surprise at her companion, who, for the first time since she had known her, showed strong emotion; but that emotion was almost instantly subdued, and Rosalind again felt chilled and hurt, as she showed by her reply.

"It is many months since we parted, Mrs. Denham. I left you in sorrow—yet never once during that time have you asked of my welfare. Does that show an interest in my fate?"

"You are giving your own suppositions the importance of facts, and asserting as true what examination may prove to be false. I sent

neither letter nor message during that time, and I had my reasons for this—perhaps insufficient ones, but we will discuss them hereafter. You seem unwilling to confess, so I must follow Mrs. Philips's lead and question. Are you engaged to Mr. Lennard?"

"No—yes—no," answered the agitated Rosalind, confused by the abruptness of the demand.

"No—yes—no. Which am I to believe, Miss Trevor?" asked Mrs. Denham coldly.

"I would say that Mr. Lennard has never spoken to me on the subject," replied Rosalind, mastering her emotion to a certain extent.

"Nor Captain or Mrs. Trevor?"

"No, madam."

"Have they hinted nothing by words or looks?" questioned Mrs. Denham, evidently surprised at her reply.

"Nothing by words."

"Nor your brother?" fixing a scrutinising gaze upon her.

"This is more than I can bear, Mrs. Den-

ham," exclaimed poor Rosalind, with a burst of passionate feeling. "If you have a kindly purpose in your heart towards me and mine say so, and I will tell you all; but if you only question me from curiosity—a cold unsympathising curiosity—then let me go:—you cannot tell what I have borne—what I must bear."

"And why cannot I tell this?" questioned Mrs. Denham, in an excited tone.

"Because you are rich, and do not know what it is to dread a prison for those whom you love best:—because you have never loved, and therefore cannot tell what it is to be compelled to give your hand without your heart."

"I have loved, Rosalind Trevor! loved as purely, as unselfishly as you have done," exclaimed Mrs. Denham, with a burst of agony, that coming from one generally so cold, so self-possessed, startled and touched her hearer. "You may have heard among my many suitors the name of Hubbert. To all others I was indifferent—for him I would have laid down

my life — for him I sacrificed myself. We parted as lovers—affianced lovers, though by our mutual wish, the world knew it not; and at the expiration of my mourning for my mother, we were to be united. His letters grew studied—cold:—his return was delayed, and when at length he came, I saw that his heart was changed, though his words were the same. He had seen one fairer — younger, but too poor to wed. He loved another—and yet he would have claimed my hand despite his breach of faith, had I not guessed his falsehood. I sought out her he loved:—she was worthy of his regard, and her heart was his, for she knew nothing of his prior engagement. From me she received the dowry which enabled her to wed:—I attended that wedding, and the world said it had been at most but a passing fancy between me and my perjured lover, and then the same world added—'she is too cold to love!' I never loved another, and could not meet him even now after so many years without

the beating of my heart, proclaiming him its master; and yet when his fair bride died, and he dared sue to me again, I seemed so cold—so calm, I could not brook to be the second where I had once been first. Shocked by a lover's perfidy I turned to friendship for relief; but I was soured, and had grown proud and jealous. There too I wished to be the first—I could not bear a rival near my friend: —she must love me, and me alone—a wife—a mother would have dearer ties. It was this feeling, and the malicious report of some galling, but just observations on my petty jealousy and forbidding manner, that made me your father's enemy, and induced me to exert my influence against his hopes. Reasoning and persuasion were alike in vain, the devoted lover was preferred to the exacting friend; and then it was that I felt myself alone in the world; but not unloving as that world supposed, only unloved. Pining for affection, yet disdaining to sue for it; repelling by my

manner those who might have been won by my benefits. Writhing under the effects of faithlessness and falsehood — wounded by your mother's preference for another—soured and made suspicious by the servile homage paid to my wealth, I resolved that the mind should overrule the heart—that I would subdue all feelings that could disturb my peace—that I would be no longer the slave of hope, or fear, or love. There were many who thought I had succeeded, and Rosalind Trevor was one of the number; but she knew me not—they knew me not — I knew not myself: — despite the struggle of long years — despite the studied reserve of my manners, nature would have her way—I felt—I suffered, though none guessed it. I could assume the appearance of cold indifference, but I could not attain its reality. The world judged me unfeelingly, influenced to charity only by a cold sense of duty. As that poor palsied woman said, upright but harsh; and so thought Rosalind Trevor; but

she was mistaken, and to her I say what I have never said to another."

"Forgive me, my dear Mrs. Denham," exclaimed the affectionate girl, throwing her arms round her neck, and bursting into tears, too much moved by her appeal, so full of the heart's eloquence, to be restrained by a fear of her fancied coldness. "I have misjudged you indeed! I would not believe my mother when she spoke of the warmth of your heart. If I had but understood you sooner, how different would have been my conduct! how different might have been my fate!"

"The blame of this misunderstanding must rest mostly with myself: a word would have touched you—an expression of affection would have won you: I saw that it did from others, yet I was too proud to utter that word, too suspicious to ask for your affection, even in our private interviews, though deeply touched by your conduct: I repelled your confidence, and controlled my own emotion: I gave you

no reason to believe me other than cold, and yet I felt aggrieved at your so doing. Though irritated at your mother's marriage, I never lost sight of her and her family, learning all that I desired to know from Mrs. Sewell, without her understanding my purpose; and yet I was fretted at your believing that I had never inquired after the fortunes of my early friend. As I felt myself growing old, I longed to see her and her children, but too proud to own that longing, I summoned all my young relations round me, that the presence of yourself and brother might not seem marked, allowing Mrs. Sewell to spread the report, the offspring of her own fancy, that this assemblage was for the purpose of enabling me to choose an heir. The servility of some — the mean manœuvres of others, disgusted me; nay, prejudiced by the insinuations of a wily hypocrite, I suspected even you for a time of interested motives, believing that you had been tutored by your mother; and when your father's letter

came, influenced by a seemingly simple speech from that same deceiver, I resolved to think that your summons home was but a *ruse* to soften my heart in favour of your parents. It was a supposition of what might be, rather than a conviction of what was; but I chose to act upon it, though scarcely able to maintain my wonted cold demeanour at your indignant rejection of my gift, and appeal to my better feelings. By detaining Mrs. Sewell, and enforcing a compliance with her wish to hear by every post, I secured not only daily, but correct intelligence of the state of your mother's health. Had she grown worse, I would have travelled day and night to have received her parting embrace — her forgiveness. No one knew it, but I had every thing prepared for the journey. Her amendment altered my plans, and yielding again to wily insinuations, I became confirmed in my suspicions, that her reported illness had been but a *ruse*. I acquitted you of being a party to the trick,

counting you only a blind instrument in the hands of Captain Trevor, for your mother I knew must be changed indeed if she could scheme, or even enact deception."

"You should have known that my father is too high minded to stoop to such meanness," observed Rosalind indignantly, reddening at the doubt implied, if not uttered of her parent's honor.

"I should have known many things, Rosalind: but, blinded by pride and prejudice, I saw nothing as it really was. Mrs. Sewell's fancy of choosing an heir grew gradually upon me; and I watched all around. My eyes and ears were ever open, yet so quiet was my scrutiny, so perfect my acquired self-command, none felt the keenness of my observation, and were therefore the more open to my inspection. From my youth I have piqued myself on my almost superhuman penetration;—my pride and self-confidence have been sorely punished —but of this more hereafter. I have spoken

too long of my feelings, when my purpose in coming hither was not to talk, but to act—not to defend myself, but to save you from an impending sorrow. Your charge that never having loved I could not feel for another, urged me to a confession, which I had never intended to make, stirring an emotion which I could not control. To you alone in a moment of weakness has my secret been revealed—you must hold it sacred! I have been too long unused to pity—too long schooled in self-command not to feel humiliated by this involuntary confidence."

"Not humiliated, dear Mrs. Denham; so much of admiration mingles with my sympathy. And do not bid me forget that burst of strong emotion, I could not do it if I would—I would not do it if I could; it won my love and trust at once; but for that, I might still have thought you cold and reserved."

"Then you do not think so now, Rosalind?"

"No: I can never think you so again; and

and if you will but let me, will love you very dearly."

"Let you!—why, I would bribe you to that love with all my wealth; if gold could buy affection," exclaimed Mrs. Denham with nearly as much warmth as Rosalind herself, kissing her glowing cheek, and passing her arm caressingly round her neck. "I shall turn simpleton, Rosalind, if you talk in this way; and people will say that I am in my dotage."

"Never mind what the people say; but be a dear, kind, loveable simpleton, rather than a grave, severe philosopher," cried Rosalind gaily, with the confidence of growing affection, seating herself beside Mrs. Denham on the sofa, and holding her hand in hers.

"Now for my questions, Rosalind. Do you love young Lennard?"

"No."

"Yet your father and brother would compel you to give him your hand."

"No indeed, dear Mrs. Denham; you wrong

them by the supposition; it is a compelling of circumstances, not of relations. My parents have not spoken to me on the subject—my brother would not press me if he guessed half my repugnance—and one word of appeal to Mr. Lennard would free me from all importunity."

"And yet you have consented, or will consent to receive as a husband one whom you do not love?"

"I have not yet consented—I have asked for time. But what can I do?" said Rosalind turning very pale. "We are already indebted to young Lennard almost beyond our means to pay. Can I see my father in a prison, and my mother pining away with grief, if the blow do not break her heart at once?"

"Is there no alternative, Rosalind. Have you no friend to whom you can apply?" asked Mrs. Denham reproachfully.

"There is one who can—but will she save

me?" questioned Rosalind, looking eagerly into her companion's face.

"I will: it was for that purpose that I came."

"Heaven bless you, Mrs. Denham! I have no words to thank you; I could have borne death better than this hated marriage. At times I thought I should go mad, for I had none to tell my sorrow to. But you do not know the extent of our debt to young Lennard," she added, the glow of hope and gratitude fading away at the thought.

"Nearly two thousand pounds lent to your father to satisfy an unjust claim; and twelve hundred lent to your brother to pay for—needful military accoutrements I suppose I must say," repliedMrs. Denham sarcastically "I warned you of what you shouid expect from your brother."

"You did; yet he is ever kind and affectionate; and had he wealth would load me with gifts."

"And leave his debts unpaid—that is his honest debts, to honest tradesmen. A gambler's debts of honor—debts of dishonor they should be called—must be provided for. But he is your brother, and I will not be hard upon him; all shall be paid. It is barely three days since I heard of these losses, and I only delayed my journey hither to give Mrs. Philips notice of my purposed visit. Let the speed of my movements attest the warmth of my regard."

"This is kind—most kind. There is only one thing," said Rosalind in some confusion. "I need not ask who told you of our difficulties, but not to lead you astray, I must repeat to you, what I said to him, that, if compelled to give my hand to either, I would rather wed young Lennard than Edred Cottrell."

"You would show your wisdom in so doing; I no longer desire that match, and far from controlling, will not even seek to influence your choice. To-night or to-morrow morning I will speak to young Lennard—pay all that is

owed him; and hint that he must seek a bride elsewhere."

"Thank you! thank you! I have not had such a light heart for many, many months. But you will do this gently, dear Mrs. Denham —very gently—will you not? We may repay his money, but we can never repay his unsought, delicate kindness; his unremitting attention to my parents—his patient endurance of my caprices," said Rosalind with a look of pity for the pangs which she had unwillingly caused him.

"Your hand would repay him; and you seem very tender hearted," observed Mrs. Denham eyeing her keenly.

"Not my hand without my heart; and that he cannot have," answered the blushing girl, looking away.

"He shall be kindly dealt with, Rosalind; doubt it not—this is the least reparation that I can offer for believing him capable of making an ungenerous use of his wealth. But my

errand is only half fulfilled—my budget of news only half revealed—

> "Have you no other boon to crave?
> No other captive friend to save?"

"What do you mean?" asked Rosalind half eagerly, half timidly, her eyes raised for a moment to Mrs. Denham's face, then fixed upon the ground as she caught her confusing smile.

"Nay, if you cannot guess, my interference may be not only useless but impertinent. I thought you had set your heart on proving that Edred Cottrell was one of the three at the Hawthorn Dell; and that Jonathan Stebbing, and Thomas Fisher had been bribed or persuaded by him to swear falsely against Rupert Wyvill."

"Then it was as I said: and Mr. Wyvill's honor will stand as clear to the world, as it has ever done to his friends. How will he rejoice at this; for his noble spirit was sorely fretted at that unjust verdict. How good, how kind of you, my dear Mrs. Denham!" exclaimed the

delighted Rosalind, once more throwing her arms around her. "I am quite happy now."

"I am very glad to hear it, my dear, but do not smother me in your joy and gratitude," said Mrs. Denham;—yet not harshly—not coldly, for there were tears in her eyes, as she kissed her young companion's brow. "Keep your raptures for Rupert, who will doubtless return and be grateful for them."

"Does he then know? Is he coming here?" asked Rosalind blushing and confused.

"I wrote this morning, telling him that you had always asserted his innocence; and that the proofs of the conspiracy against him were in your hands. Do you think his coming will be long delayed?"

"Oh! Mrs. Denham, how could you tell him this? What will he think? What will he say?" exclaimed the blushing Rosalind, trembling like an aspen.

"That is your concern, my dear, as his

transports of gratitude will doubtless be addressed to you—not me."

"If he should think that I knew of this letter—that I had sanctioned it—I shall die of shame."

"Come, come, Rosalind, I have never heard of young ladies dying thus outright, though they have often talked of it. Be calm, and listen to me. Do not let maidenly terrors overmaster your strong good sense."

"Be calm, Mrs. Denham! Will the ocean be smooth as a mirror if you bid it?"

"Were I such an idiot as to issue the order, I should deserve to be overwhelmed in its waves for my folly. I should never have thought of comparing you to the Atlantic or the Pacific—certainly not the latter, but you can control your emotion, for I have seen you do it, when even I, so long practised in the art, was surprised at your resolution. I have not acted without knowledge and consideration; and surely you may rely on my having said

nothing that could pain the most sensitive delicacy. My enquries have informed me that he came with a whole heart to Denham, but took not a whole heart away: that is to say, not the same whole heart. The lady at Drinkbourne was his half-sister, who with her mother owed every comfort, it might almost be said their lives, to his bounty. What you meant by saying that he was attached and engaged to a friend of yours I cannot make out, as he persists in denying any attachment prior to knowing you."

"It was a mistake—a misapprehension."

"A very unlucky mistake, causing much misery," said Mrs. Denham.

"Yes, it was," answered Rosalind, with a sigh. "But how did you become acquainted with his — sentiments—his?"

"Love for you; — out with the word, Rosalind; there is no one but an old woman present to mark your embarrassment. You do not desire to have your curiosity gratified

for doubting me, or rather pretending to doubt me, as I suspect, in the hope of inducing me to repeat the pleasing intelligence; but for once I will indulge you, I learnt it from Mr. Adnam, and he learnt it from Rupert himself, whose sudden emotion on hearing of your intended union with young Lennard betrayed his secret: not that I needed this confirmation of my suspicions, for I never doubted the fact after marking Wyvill's look of despair on hearing that he should not see you again before his departure from Denham. Mr. Adnam, it seems, having taken a fancy to you, desired to make up a match between you and his young friend; but till this sudden betrayal of Rupert's feelings believed him to be as indifferent to you, as he still imagines you to be to him, for I have not undeceived him on that point, as I see you are fearing. Whether Mr. Adnam's conduct at Denham was that best calculated to promote his views, I leave you and Rupert to decide hereafter; but there is one question,

Rosalind, which you must answer truly, that I may see my course clear for the future. Had you not been misled by the idea of his pre-engagement, would not his words and manner on more than one occasion, have induced you to believe him attached to yourself?"

"Yes," faltered Rosalind; "and I was frightened at the belief, lest I should be led to prove false to my friend."

"My poor Rosalind! you have had many trials, but I trust they are past now; and that you will be blest for the future," said Mrs. Denham affectionately. "I leave Rupert to ask of your feelings towards him; and yet, if I judge correctly, he was no favorite on your first arrival."

"No; he had called me a romp two years before, just at that age when a girl is so ambitious of being thought a woman, and I was the more piqued and provoked at this from being compelled to admit his superiority over most other men. I could not despise his judgment

—Edred's remarks increased my vexation; and in my pride I resolved that he should cease to regard me with careless indifference, and as we were not friends we would be foes, and combat *à l'outrance;* so we had many keen encounters, as you heard: and we tilted and tilted—till I could tilt no longer in right earnest. In my pride and arrogance I had sought the trial, and had no right to complain of being vanquished I trust to be more humble for the future;—his worth I ever admitted."

"Since you allow yourself vanquished, it remains with Rupert to admit you to ransom, or hold you his slave, so to his mercy, or justice I shall resign you. I suspect he will choose the latter; and by your trembling one would imagine that you shared my anticipations, and dreaded to behold your master."

"You are growing malicious," said Rosalind still looking on the ground.

"I would only have Rupert tame you a little,

my dear, for your good; your high spirit leads you to rebellion."

"I never rebel against those I love; and who love me," said Rosalind a little reproachfully.

"I will report that to Rupert."

"Indeed you shall do no such thing: I only meant it for you. If he play the tyrant—let him look to it!" said Rosalind with a pretty pout, half pride, half playfulness.

"He shall be warned of your fiery mood. But you have not yet asked how the proofs of the plot against his honor came into my possession?"

"You have been talking such nonsense, that I could not ask anything."

"Then I suppose I must tell without being questioned," replied Mrs. Denham with a smile. "To tell the truth, your tale of the meeting at Hawthorn Dell appeared so strange and mysterious that I could not help attributing much of its seeming singularity to your

fervent imagination, though I never doubted your believing that you had seen and heard all as related; but now I admit my error. There was no exaggeration in your report, and to your account of the meeting, and Rupert's own humanity is he principally indebted for the means of confounding his enemies. The third man, whose accidental stumbling alarmed you and the plotters, was the son of Hester Darley, who, on learning to whom his mother had been indebted for so much kindness, came forward of his own accord to clear the character of his benefactor, by repeating the conversation which he had overheard between Edred Cottrell and Fisher. It appears that Rupert's servant having some years before attempted, with the aid of Fisher, to rob Edred was ready to become his instrument in injuring his master, partly to secure himself, and partly to be revenged for his hasty dismission; but Fisher, whom it was also needful to bribe to ensure success to the plot, fearful of being hereafter

made the scapegoat, insisted on treating with Edred in person; and thence the meeting at Hawthorn Dell as you described. The confederates parted on the instant, and by dint of swift running, taking short cuts, and leaping hedges and ditches Edred succeeded in reaching the house some minutes before yourself, thus hoping, I conclude, to allay your suspicions, should you have formed any."

"To whom did Richard Darley tell all this?" asked Rosalind.

"To me:—you look surprised."

"I thought you had a warrant out against him, and wished to send him from the country," answered Rosalind hesitatingly.

"Out with the truth, Rosalind; I can bear it now, though it chafed me then. Like that poor palsied creature you thought me, if an upright, yet a hard woman;—you were right. Their truth made those words more galling, and they dwelt on my mind till I was forced to admit to the justice of the remark so humbling

my pride. It was then for the first time since many years that I prayed with humility, and a sense of dependance; before, in my anger, I had said in my heart I will suffice to myself. I provided for the old woman's wants—I visited her often, though her manner ever continued ungracious, for the ideas impressed on her waning intellect could not be effaced by after kindness; and touched by her strong affection for her son, and judging that he who could inspire such a constant regard could not be utterly depraved, I overlooked his misdemeanours towards myself, and so far interested others in his behalf as to enable him to reside with his child and mother, supplying him with work so as to leave him no excuse for idleness or theft. My favor has not been abused, and I hope he has abjured his evil ways for ever;—his gratitude I believe sincere. You must go and see them, Rosalind—you are not forgotten by any of the three; for your gifts are ever doubled in value by your gracious manner,

whilst mine—but I must mend my manner—you must teach me how to win hearts. Through Darley's agency, I have secured the deposition of Fisher as to the fact of his having been bribed by Edred Cottrell to perjure himself about the leap, and Todd's state of sobriety; and as this deposition was made before two magistrates, he can scarcely be guilty of perjury a second time, let Edred bribe as he may; and there is every chance of tracing Stebbing and gaining an admission of the truth from him, so, at the next summer assizes, we may obtain a different verdict from the last. I have brought the deposition with me that Rupert may receive it from your hands, as some little reparation for my harshness and incredulity when we last discussed the subject. No thanks."

"Yes; but I must thank you dear Mrs. Denham. And yet I know not how," answered Rosalind, her eyes swimming in tears.

"Then do enact the silent woman for once,

my dear. I am not Rupert Wyvill, that you need rebel or tilt against me."

"I would not have believed that you could look or speak so mischievously," said the blushing Rosalind, confused by her raillery: then changing the topic, she asked—"Does Edred know all this?"

"He has not heard it from me, but I will never again pretend to decide on the extent of his knowledge. He seems to know every thing, and turn every thing to his own advantage. I clearly perceive that you would have had me say—Edred Cottrell, you are a slanderer, a perjurer, a hypocrite—let me never see you again."

"I did so myself," said Rosalind.

"Pardon me if I observe that your having done so is no proof of wisdom: you may repent having provoked his enmity. To put him on his guard before we had procured full evidence against him might cause his triumph instead of ours—enough, that he shall never enter Denham

again, nor inherit aught from me. He supposes me to have come hither on his errand, since he it was who told me of your intended union with young Lennard, finding his own endeavours to prevent it vain; but though I expressed no displeasure in words, he may have guessed my thoughts, for as I said before, he guesses every thing, and turns every thing to his own advantage. If I had not been blinded by an erroneous belief of the infallibility of my judgment, and the unerring keenness of my penetration—if I had but believed him what you reported, how much suffering should I have saved us all! But I am no longer his dupe, as he shall find in due time. I have asked you many questions, Rosalind; but I would ask you one more.—Your mother—we have been long estranged, and that estrangement was all my doing—can she meet me now with the confiding affection of other days? Will she not regard me with coldness and distrust?"

"Only meet her, dear Mrs. Denham, and let

her manner be your answer. In all our joys her thought has ever been—'Oh, that Sarah were but here to share them!—in all our woes—if Sarah did but know of our misfortunes she would be here to soothe, and to remove them.'"

"Then why not apply to me?"

"No, my dear madam, that could not be: you knew that my mother was ill, perhaps dying; and yet sent no message."

"So if your mother had proposed appealing to me in your troubles, her husband and daughter would have dissuaded her from so doing."

"Forgive me, my dear Mrs. Denham, but could I do otherwise? Would you not then have despised us for making such an appeal? To spare my mother pain I spoke mostly of your kindness."

"And said little of my coldness and reserve: I understand you," observed Mrs. Denham, with a sigh. "Your mother judged me less

hardly—I wish I might say more justly—than her family; but I deserved not that you should think better of me, or that the friend of my youth, whom I flung off, should still regard me with affection, yet the continuance of her regard through so long an estrangement is very touching. You say I may test that regard by her manner, so let it be then. And your father—how will he meet me?"

"With the warmest gratitude, and the deepest regret for having misjudged you. Do not doubt them—only meet both frankly and warmly, and it will be as if you had always been friends—as if you had parted only yesterday."

"Would that it could be so, Rosalind; but it cannot—will not—I dare not hope it:—my anticipated joy is mixed with fear. There is a weight on my spirits—I feel doomed to punishment for my long course of pride. Either your mother will not meet me as you say; or I shall not live to welcome her to Denham."

"Do not think it: you have been talking of the past, my dear Mrs. Denham, that is all. Do not cloud my joy by such painful anticipations," said Rosalind affectionately, kissing the hand she held.

"The issues of life and death are in the hands of the All-wise, All-good—it may please him not only to permit me to repair some of the evil done but also to witness its reparation. Let him do as he seeth best," said Mrs. Denham, submissively. "But I would not infect you with my sadness, and here comes a summons to tea. Shall I speak to young Lennard to-night, or to-morrow?"

"To-night, if you please; every moment that prolongs his delusion is a fresh wrong towards him."

"To-night let it be then: I am ever for prompt measures."

"Where is Lennard, Miss Trevor?" asked Mr. Philips after tea, having concluded a long

argument with Mr. Tuson concerning the poor-laws.

"He is gone with Mrs. Denham into the next room to look at your new Madonna," observed Mrs. Philips, coming to the relief of the blushing Rosalind, who, knowing that the subject under discussion was neitherpainting nor painter, sat vainly endeavouring to conceal her agitation by a pretended attention to her work.

"Hey day! that is rather suspicious, I think. If I were you, Miss Trevor, I would follow to play proper."

"I think I shall play proper much better by remaining here," answered Rosalind, forcing a smile.

A question from Mr. Tuson turned his host's thoughts to other subjects, and almost immediately after Mrs. Denham called on Rosalind to look at the clouds in the west.

"Is it over? How did he bear it?" asked Rosalind, timidly.

"Admirably. I could almost wish that he had been your choice; but he requests permission to speak to you—to bid you farewell. Do not be distressed and alarmed, my dear; he has promised not to detain you above five minutes, and not to pain you by entreaties, which he fully understands would be useless. I would have spared you this trial, but his heart is set upon it; and you owe him something in reparation."

"I do, indeed," answered Rosalind, sadly.

"Forgive me, Miss Trevor, for seeking this interview. I will say, and do nothing to distress you; I will not even embarrass you by speaking of an affection, which I fully comprehend from Mrs. Denham you never have, you never can return," exclaimed young Lennard with a quivering lip, advancing eagerly to meet her as she entered the room where he awaited her. "I am not worthy of you—I was too presumptuous in aspiring to your hand—my

devotion might move your pity, but I have no talents to acquire your regard."

"Not worthy Mr. Lennard? most worthy of all regard! and I deeply regret that I cannot.—"

"Yes, yes; I understand—you pity me; and that is all that I should have expected," said young Lennard closing her sentence. "But it was not for this I requested your presence; I wished to convince you that, till informed of the fact by Mrs. Denham, I had no idea of my suit having been pressed upon you ungenerously, and that I am deeply grieved and shamed that such has been the case. Believe me when I assure you, most solemnly assure you, that any little services which it has been my happiness to render to your family were rendered without the idea, or hope of reward; and that I am shocked to find they were urged to influence your decision on a subject on which I above all desired your unbiassed choice. Do you acquit me of this cruelty?"

"Fully! readily! Even when pained by your persevering attentions, and still more pained by a representation of our obligations to you, I always felt that you would not have pleaded as another pleaded for you. I knew that you could not harbour one ungenerous thought, and that an appeal to you would free me from importunity, though not from debt."

"Thank you, Miss Trevor, for this kind assurance, which has set my mind at ease," exclaimed young Lennard warmly. "Can you do more?—can you forgive me the pain which I have unwittingly caused you?"

"It is for me to ask forgiveness of you," said Rosalind overcome by his generosity, the tears, which she had in vain endeavoured to repress, falling fast as she spoke. "I must ever feel towards you the sincerest gratitude."

"And you forgive me—you weep for me—you promise me your esteem. I will endeavour to prove myself worthy of your good opinion. I shall leave England immediately, for I could

not remain in the same country and not see you; or see you and not pain you now—hereafter I hope to meet you as a friend. God bless you, Miss Trevor! I shall never forget your pitying kindness — your gentle words have soothed my pangs."

A tear fell on the hand he pressed to his lips; but before Rosalind could reply he had rushed from the room and out of the house.

A hint from Mrs. Denham to her host and hostess saved Rosalind all embarrassing remarks, though Mr. Philips was very much annoyed that his rosebud, as he called her, was not to become his cousin.

CHAPTER IX.

"ARE you quite sure that your mother knows nothing of my intended visit?" asked Mrs. Denham as the carriage containing herself and Rosalind approached Ivy Cottage on the succeeding morning.

"Quite sure, for I see her in the garden tying up her favorite flowers; and I am certain she would be too much agitated to do that if she knew of your coming. Now, do not cloud our happiness—your happiness may I say?

by idle fancies, dear Mrs. Denham," added Rosalind, taking her hand caressingly, seeing that she changed colour. "Let my mother's manner at this meeting be the test of her feelings, as I said last night; but to make it a just test, there must be warmth in your greeting, as well as in your heart. Do not, I entreat you, disdain to show what I see you feel."

"You are convinced at last then that I can feel," she replied, returning the pressure of Rosalind's hand.

"Yes, quite convinced of that; and I count myself an idiot for not having discovered it nearly a year ago. But here we are at Ivy Cottage."

Mrs. Denham had before been leaning back, but as the carriage turned round the little sweep to the door, she bent forward for a moment — that moment was sufficient. Mrs. Trevor recognised her at a glance, and was soon in the arms of her old friend, pouring forth broken exclamations of joy at their pre-

sent meeting, and regret at their long estrangement. Now smiling—now sobbing; and wondering how any one could ever have thought Mrs. Denham cold or reserved, so warm was the greeting she received in return for her own affectionate and unceremonious welcome.

"Did I say more than was true, dear Mrs. Denham?" asked Rosalind, entering the room where the two old friends had been considerately left together.

"Not one word too much, dear girl," replied Mrs. Denham, kissing her affectionately, and wiping away the tears that glistened on her own eyelashes. "But though I acquit you of exaggeration on that point, not so your mother; I cannot persuade her that I was ever really as chilling and awful as you describe."

"I am glad of it; since it proves that your manner has been as warm as I now know your heart to be. You may scold as you please, mamma, and I will not say one word in my

defence—I should have looked beneath the surface," answered Rosalind smiling through her tears.

"My wife has had you to herself long enough, Mrs. Denham; you must now listen to my thanks, and pronounce my pardon for having doubted your friendly feelings towards my family," said Captain Trevor, holding out his hand and speaking with much feeling. "Jealous of your influence over Rosalind—hurt at your seeking to prevent our union, the lover made remarks, which the man most truly regrets. And here you come like the good spirit in a fairy tale to shame me into repentance, by showering your bounty upon me and mine. You have freed me from debt;—you have done more—you have saved my noble and affectionate child from sacrificing herself for the good of others. You may not forgive my reproaches of former days, but you cannot forbid my present gratitude—so sincere—so unbounded. Say what you will—do what you

what you will hereafter; but I must still be your debtor for life."

"No debtor at all, Captain Trevor," replied Mrs. Denham with a voice as unsteady as his own. "I was more to blame than yourself in former days; and am bound to repair the mischief caused by my own pride and folly. Rosalind—our Rosalind, for she must learn to regard me as a second mother—has been the greatest sufferer, and we must make her happiness our first consideration. I was selfish in bygone years, when I strove to part you and your bride; and I fear I am but selfish now, seeking for your regard to cheer my declining days. We will try to forget the past."

"Readily, Mrs. Denham. For my part, I feel quite young again, and our merry Rosalind looks very differently to what she did two days ago; whilst my wife I conclude will come out a beauty to-morrow, if she do not weep her eyes out for joy to-day. Let the philosophers say what they will, happiness is the elixir of

life that makes us young in heart, if not in person. With Heaven's blessing, health, and friends, I count myself but twenty-one."

"Then please, papa, what age am I to be?" asked Rosalind archly.

"Oh, you must go back to bread puddings and pinafores; reading, writing, dunce's caps, and the corner," answered her father laughing.

"Woe is me!" cried Rosalind with a ludicrous expression of sorrow. "I always heard that people thinking themselves younger than they really were was a great evil; and now I find the truth of the remark from experience."

"If my father owes you much, I owe you more, Mrs. Denham," said Michael, frankly, advancing with an ingenuous blush. "You have saved me from disgrace, or the guilt and misery of blighting all my sister's hopes of happiness. I do not deserve your kindness, though I trust I shall ever feel most grateful for it."

"I trust you will prove yourself worthy of it," replied Mrs. Denham, a little gravely, but not harshly, for his frank admission of error had softened her sentiments towards him, though she did not place much reliance on his promises of prudence, related afterwards by Rosalind; or believe him to have been quite as ignorant of her great repugnance to a union with young Lennard as he asserted.

It was a day of happiness at Ivy Cottage; the next day was, if possible, happier still, for it had less of sad remembrances, and more of joyful anticipations. It was a less tumultuous—a more peaceful joy.

Mrs. Denham was very desirous to carry off the Trevors at once to Denham Park. She should not feel quite certain—quite assured of her happiness till she welcomed her old friend there; but as Captain Trevor expected a visit from Mr. Woolley's acting executor, which would prevent his leaving home for the present, it was settled that Mrs. Denham should

spend the intervening time with the Philipses, Ivy Cottage, containing only a small spare bachelor's room. They might then all return to Denham together; and as the Mount was so near, and the Philipses such friendly, considerate people, the families could be as much together as they pleased.

"There is only one thing that I insist on," said Mr. Philips, as he handed Mrs. Denham into her carriage; "and that is, that if you go to Ivy Cottage in the morning, you must bring back the Trevors to dine with me in the evening. I have scarcely set eyes on you for years, since yon were a young woman, surrounded by suitors, for you never would come and see us before; and I have hardly spoken to Trevor since my return from foreign parts, nor said half I have to say to my little rose-bud; so positively you bring them back with you to the Mount."

Mrs. Denham did bring them back with her; and Mr. Philips was in his element,

talking as fast as he could talk, uttering a thousand odd and merry things, scolding Rosalind for not becoming his cousin, in spite of her blushes and his wife's remonstrances; and then protesting that she must be in love because, confused by his jests, she eat *paté and poulet* together, and looked eagerly out of the window, if she heard the sound of horse's hoofs.

Nor was he in this so far from the truth, for Rosalind and Mrs. Denham were in momentary expectation of Wyvill's arrival, more than sufficient time having elapsed since the receipt of Mrs. Denham's letter, had he sped with a lover's speed.

Merrily passed the dinner—merrily passed the evening; all was gaiety for the present—all hope for the future; but alas! for the uncertainty of human joys, ere night closed in came an express to say that Mr. Wilkins, the steward, was supposed to be dying, and most anxious to see Mrs. Denham before his death.

It was a great shock to Mrs. Denham, for he

had managed her concerns during many years, and was regarded as a valued friend. She would have set off immediately, but as the letter, which was from his medical attendant, spoke of his probably lingering three or four days, she yielded to the persuasions of her friends and consented, instead of encountering the delays and dangers of a night journey, to defer her departure till the morning; so post horses were ordered at six: and all did their best to cheer her by consoling prognostications.

At Mrs. Denham's request the Trevors stayed late: she felt loath to part with them, and she owned it.

"I am grieved to be separated again from you so soon," she remarked as she held Mrs. Trevor's hand in hers; "but the summons of a dying man must not be unheeded—it is the voice of providence."

"This is thursday; and tuesday we shall all be with you at Denham," observed Rosalind cheerfully.

"Shall you?" said Mrs. Denham in a voice so startling that Rosalind shuddered, remembering her fancy that she should never welcome her old friend to Denham Park.

"Depend on that; since you will not let me go with you as I wished."

"No, dear girl; you shall not accompany me, though I am thankful for your offer. Rupert may be expected every hour; and you must remain to smile upon him," she added in a whisper, which silenced for a time the blushing Rosalind.

"It is friday too; I do believe that you are a *leetle* afraid of that," observed Mr. Philips who had a silly dread of the day himself. "Stay till saturday; perhaps Woolley's executor will come to-morrow, and then you can all go together."

"I have no weakness of that sort; friday is to me as any other day. I only feel;—but it is nonsense to talk of feelings, when we are called on to act, so farewell till—we meet again on

tuesday. I must not detain you any longer—the night air is not good for you," replied Mrs. Denham, kissing her old friend affectionately, and confiding her to the care of Mr. Philips, who was waiting to hand her to the carriage, which was to take her back to Ivy Cottage.

The low, earnest "God bless you!" that followed as she looked after her was only heard by Rosalind, who was shocked at its tone.

"Do let me go with you! I will be quite ready by six," pleaded Rosalind, reading her thoughts. "I do not like to let you go alone, since your maid has by your permission gone to visit her friends; and there is now no time to recall her. If any one should wish to see me, he may follow," she added in a voice too low to be caught by the others, who knew nothing of Wyvill's attachment.

"No, my dear; I am determined; I will conquer this idle fancy. But you will not be later than tuesday."

"Most certainly not."

"Good bye till then," said Mrs. Denham, striving to speak more cheerfully.

"Come, Rose, you will smother Mrs. Denham, and my mother will catch cold from having the carriage door open, cried Michael rather impatiently.

"Go, my love," said Mrs. Denham gently, putting away the weeping girl.

"Come along," said her brother, drawing her away.

"One word, Rosalind," said Mrs. Denham.

Rosalind was at her side in a minute.

"I have written to my solicitor to destroy my old will, and draw up a new one;—in whose favor I think I need not say;—we may not meet again."

"Oh! never mind the will—banish all gloomy thoughts; you make me shudder with such horrid fancies. We shall all meet and be happy at Denham—I am sure we shall. You will see that I shall turn out the true prophet," answered Rosalind.

"Heaven grant you may! God bless you! now, and for ever, whether we meet again or not," said Mrs. Denham solemnly, holding Rosalind in a second and still closer embrace, then putting her away abruptly as if ashamed of her own emotion.

Rosalind turned as she reached the door, and met the lingering, earnest gaze of her mother's early friend.

The chill of fear crept over her; and she would have returned for the purpose of pressing the acceptance of her companionship; but her brother drew her on, and her father called from the carriage.

"I do believe Mrs. Denham only pretended to have something to say that she might give you another kiss, Rosalind. There is something very odd about her to-night—this summons has shaken her dreadfully," observed Michael to his sister, as he led her through the hall.

"There is something very strange about her;

—I wish she would have allowed me to go with her," answered Rosalind.

"You are too weak yet for so speedy and long a journey, though I never saw any one so much improved in health in so short a time," replied her brother. "But what has come over you now? You are looking like a ghost," he added, catching sight of her pallid face as she passed beneath a lamp.

"Nothing: do not frighten my mother," said Rosalind, stepping quickly into the carriage.

"Mrs. Denham seemed much affected at parting with you for even a few days," observed Captain Trevor thoughtfully, as they were driving home.

"More so than I should have expected from her strong mind, though I know her feelings to be very warm; but she was upset by her steward's illness. I long to meet her again at Denham—it will be so like old times. We will set

off very early on monday morning, that we may be with her by the middle of the day on tuesday," replied Mrs. Trevor cheerfully.

She had no mournful anticipations to mar the brightness of the present.

> "The future lay outstretched before her view,
> Like a broad plain spread o'er with cloth of gold."

CHAPTER X.

It was near mid-day; yet the best breakfast things remained set out in the best parlour at the Red Lion, a small inn on the road between Ivy Cottage and Denham Park, standing at about the distance of twenty miles from the former.

And there was one who sat in that same parlour with a changing cheek, and a changing mood; but ever a contracted brow, and often a flashing eye. Yet he was young and hand-

some, with a manner that won popularity—a clear, quick intellect to direct his course, and a fortune that many envied. Could those who envied him have read his heart at that moment they would have shrunk back, appalled at the fierce passions raging there, and learnt that peace is not the handmaid of wealth, or beauty, or popularity; but cares for neither, dwelling with the meek and lowly—not with the proud and prosperous.

The food set before him had been scarcely touched—when the mind works the wants of the body are forgotten—and there he sat, now leaning back in his chair, now with his elbows resting on the table supporting his bowed head, his set teeth and fiery eye telling a tale of wrath, and dissappointed malice.

And who was the solitary sojourner at this poor inn, who was too deep in thought to note how quickly, or how slowly sped the time?

It was Edred Cottrell. Mrs. Denham had not said to him you are a slanderer, a liar, and

a hypocrite; but, without intending to do so she had looked it, or his conscience had so interpreted her glance; and as he quitted her presence he cursed his own folly for having told her that Rosalind's hand was to pay her brother's debts. He watched the movements of the owner of Denham Park—he saw her hurried departure—he learnt whither she was going, and felt at a thought that Rosalind would be saved—but not for him. His rule was past—yet a will had been made in his favor, and should Mrs. Denham die before she could make another, he would inherit the greater part of her landed property. At least he would follow, and be on the spot to avail himself of any chance that might turn up; his fears might have misled him—her demeanour was always reserved, or if she only suspected him he might convince her of his uprightness by means of the honied tongue, which had so often stood him in good stead before.

Thus arguing, he followed, and himself con-

cealed, looked on the happy party at Ivy Cottage indulging in much the same feelings with which the great enemy of mankind had contemplated the happiness of our first parents in the garden of Eden. He saw—he understood; and turned away with gnashing teeth. Rosalind had read his character—Rosalind had revealed it to Mrs. Denham; and some words caught as she passed with that lady near the shrubs that concealed him told that Wyvill was expected—that Wyvill was loved.

Rosalind wed him!—he would rather she should wed young Lennard, or be laid in her grave. Of all men in the world Rupert Wyvill was the one whom he most hated. He had triumphed over him once—it should go hard if he did not triumph over him again. But nothing could be done then with Mrs. Denham, or any at Ivy Cottage, so he rode back to the Red Lion, there to brood in silence and solitude over his disappointed hopes—his falling fortunes, and plan the means for retrieving

both. The landlady had formerly been a servant in his family; she had known him from a boy, and he knew her; she would obey his orders in all things, and advance his interests in every way—as long as he could pay her handsomely.

A bustle in the narrow street—a trampling of feet—and a confusion of tongues disturbed his train of thought, and roused him from his reverie.

"What no peace! Is there no peace to be had from within or without," he muttered as he strode to the window, and looked out on the crowd below. "They seem bringing in a dead body. If that is to stay at the Red Lion I shall leave it," was his pettish remark to the landlady, who, having closed the door behind her, advanced towards him with a pallid face, but not a saddened mien.

"I will do as you wish, sir, in all things; but mayhap you don't know whose body 'tis,

as a cloak was thrown over it," replied the woman submissively. "It is Mrs. Denham's."

"Mrs. Denham's!" exclaimed Edred Cottrell in a tone composed of many mingling emotions. "Is she dead?" he questioned eagerly after a moment's pause, with a gleam of demoniacal triumph in his keen eyes.

"Not quite, sir; but from what I sees, and hears she cannot live long, she has scarcely spoken since the accident."

"What accident?"

"Why the horses took fright, sir, at some'at —ran away, and fell into the quarry at Datchett's Lane. The carriage is smashed all to pieces—the postboy very much hurt—the manservant killed outright; and the lady herself not much better. No wonder! The post-horses came from the Bear—and the Bear horses are never good;—they never even stop to take a whisp of hay, or a drop of water at my house, though it is a long stage to T— and the land-

lord is a set up impertinent fellow. The quarry men and some others have brought the poor lady here knowing that she would find every care and comfort at the Red Lion. But as for the Black Bear postboy, he may go where any one will take him in," added the landlady with a toss of the head.

"Not yet dead—but must die speedily. She can scarcely have altered her will—she would naturally wait till her return to Denham —she shall never return! I may yet triumph! yet be heir!" were Edred Cottrell's thoughts whilst the grasping landlady of the Red Lion was venting her spite against her rival of the Black Bear.

"Had not you better have the lady under your own eye?" asked Mrs. Hudson significantly.

"Certainly: I can rely on you," he replied with equal significance. "It is lucky that she is fallen into such kind hands. I will assist in carrying her into my room, which is the

best in your house, and the quietest too, being away from the other apartments, at the end of that long passage."

The landlady's report of Mrs. Denham's state seemed more correct than reports usually are, for when placed on Edred's bed she appeared indeed to be little better than dead; deep drawn breaths, and occasional low moans alone giving proof of life. The face was of a ghastly paleness—the eyes continued closed; and she neither spoke nor moved, though Mrs. Hudson bathed her temples with vinegar and water, and even poured a little brandy down her throat.

"Poor old lady! she is almost gone—she does not see, or understand any thing," said Mrs. Hudson.

"Had not we better send for the doctor, sir?"

"She will have ceased to live before he can arrive," answered Edred after bending for some moments over the body.

"Yes, sir, that is pretty certain; but people will think it odd if he ain't sent for, and as you are to have the lady's money, I hear, it will be a satisfaction any how at the crowner's inquest. He is a young hand, and don't know much to my mind—but still he is a doctor."

"You are quite right, Hudson; I am so shocked, so bewildered that I do not know what I am about; of course all must be done that can be done. Send for the doctor directly."

"Aunt, the men have brought a trunk and some other things belonging to the lady, from the quarry. Where shall I put them?" enquired a heavy, awkward looking girl of about seventeen, entering the room at the moment, with cloaks, and a work box under her arm. "I could not bring up the trunk myself."

"Better put all the things in here at once, Molly; they will be safe in Mr. Cottrell's room —he is the poor lady's nearest relation."

"All the articles belonging to Mrs. Denham

were accordingly placed in her room; and the men handsomely paid for their trouble by Edred.

In due time Mr. Thomson, the village apothecary, or doctor as the villagers termed him, made his appearance. It was impossible to look in his face and suspect him of wisdom; and equally impossible to hear him utter a sentence, and doubt that he considered himself a Galen. He thought himself wise, and endeavoured to look wise; and some believed him to be what he desired to be thought;—not so Edred Cottrell, but his manner was courteous in the extreme; and Mr. Thomson was most deferentially submissive in return, save that he still spoke with the brevity and bluntness which he had assumed on first entering the profession, having heard that brevity and bluntness had been the characteristics of a famous London physician.

"Bad case, sir—very bad," said the young doctor, shaking his head.

"No hope?" asked Edred in a tone befitting the melancholy question.

"None, sir; sorry to distress an affectionate relative, but must tell the truth;—sincerity is a duty. We will try bleeding."

"Do you think it a case where bleeding would be adviseable? The lady is not young; I only throw out a hint, having the fullest reliance on your judgment," said Edred graciously.

"Right, sir; I honor your wisdom—bleeding is injurious in many cases, but it is the general practice, and a young medical man, however talented, must submit to trammels he despises. If you as her nearest relative forbid it, of course nothing can be said."

"Oh, no, Doctor Thomson; I defer to your judgment. But do you think that bleeding will restore her to consciousness—to health?"

"Nothing short of a miracle, or unparallelled skill could effect that, but I will do my best."

Edred made no further opposition, and the effect of the bleeding proved the wisdom of having followed the general practice, instead of individual opinion, for the patient not only opened her eyes, but, after a short time, answered the questions put to her with very tolerable clearness, though in a low voice.

"See the wonderful effects of medical skill!" said Mr. Thomson complacently drawing Edred aside. "The lady must be kept quite quiet—not talk—send a composing draught—call in three hours—can't stay now—wanted in fifty places—worked to a skeleton—dying by inches—victim to pity for suffering humanity."

"What do you think now of her chance of ultimate recovery?" asked Edred detaining him.

"Scarcely possible; skill will do much—but it is not omnipotent; she may grow worse and go off like the snuff of a candle."

"Do you think her mind will be sufficiently

clear to allow of her attending to worldly business?"

"Do you wish her to make her will, sir?"

"That is made."

"All the better, sir; she is not fit for such things now; and never will be, I fear; but I will do all I can to save your valuable relative, touched by your affectionate solicitude. Send for me if you see any alteration. Good morning sir."

Edred returned to the bed, drew back the curtain, and bent over the sufferer, who looking up at the noise, recognised him and spoke.

"Edred Cottrell—you here! Where am I?" she asked, gazing wildly round the room.

"Compose yourself, my dear Mrs. Denham, I will watch over you with a son's care; and this good woman," pointing to Mrs. Hudson, "is a most kind and excellent nurse."

"Where am I?" asked the sick woman again.

"At the Red Lion at Hinckley, my dear madam. You were brought hither after your dreadful accident: and I consider myself most happy in chancing to be here at the time. This good woman having formerly lived with my mother, I occasionally sleep a night at her house on my way to and from town. I am truly shocked to see you thus."

"Where is my servant?" asked Mrs. Denham without noticing his regrets and assurances.

"I see it would be vain to endeavour to deceive you, my dear madam; he is dead—killed on the spot."

"Dead!" repeated the sufferer with a cry of pain, caused by her start at the dreadful intelligence, as every movement increased her pangs. "And the postboy?" she asked after a short pause.

"Dying, it is said."

"'Tis late! too late!" murmured Mrs. Denham, closing her eyes, then half raising her head from the pillow, heedless of the pain it caused her, and looking keenly and imploringly into Edred's face, she spoke again with greater energy, yet evidently increasing difficulty. "Edred Cottrell, grant the prayer of a dying woman! Send for the Trevors! let me see them ere I die!"

"It shall be done, my dear madam. Can I do anything else to soothe your suffering?"

"As you hope for heaven, Edred Cottrell, will you do as you have said?" questioned the sick woman solemnly, grasping his arm, and gazing eagerly into his half-averted face.

"I will;" answered Edred; but he shook beneath her grasp, and even his lips grew of a livid whiteness.

"Send now! send instantly, or it will be too late. I am dying," she gasped, sinking back with a deep groan.

"I will go directly," said Edred, quitting the room and beckoning Mrs. Hudson to follow him.

The composing draught took effect, and Mrs. Denham sank into a heavy sleep.

"Poor lady! I hope she will live to see her friends," said the good-natured Molly to her aunt, as they sat together by the sufferer's bed.

"Pooh, niece! she would not do that if she lived a month."

"Why, aunt—won't they come?"

"Not till she is dead."

"Why to be sure the gentleman does not mean to cheat her after all, when she looked so earnest and solemn into his face? And he knows she is dying too."

"Hold your nonsense, Molly; you know nothing. Mr. Cottrell will send by and by, but I have not got no one to go just now."

"La, aunt, why Phill Harris would go in a minute, and glad to go too."

"You are always talking to me of Phill

Harris," cried her aunt sharply. "Don't meddle with what you know nothing about; she has made her will, and what need is there for her to do more? Let her die in peace, and the sooner and quicker she goes the better, poor soul; she won't suffer so much."

"And who is to have her money?"

"Mr. Cottrell to be sure."

"His money won't do him much good, if he cheats the poor dying soul. It is a shame," muttered Molly.

"Hold your tongue, oaf that you are. Do you dare vex me, who keep you from starving?" exclaimed Mrs. Hudson, who had tasted the brandy brought up for Mrs. Denham. "There —you have waked the old woman with your foolishness. Oh! no, you have not though—she sleeps sound enough," she added, peeping through the curtain. "The doctor says she will never be quite sensible again, and will die afore night. So do you keep watch, whilst I look after my customers."

The door closed after Mrs. Hudson—her steps sounded fainter and fainter, till they died away in silence; then the curtain was put gently aside, and the sick woman looked into the face of her simple nurse. The scrutiny was satisfactory; Molly might be only half witted; but she was kind hearted and honest.

"Will you win the prayers and blessings of the dying?" asked Mrs. Denham with solemn earnestness.

"Indeed, ma'am, I will do any thing to serve you," replied the girl, moved even to tears by her appeal.

"Will you send Phill Harris to bring my friends?—for no one else will do it."

"That will I directly, ma'am; and he has a horse of his own, and will be back very soon. Phill will do any thing I ask him," she added almost equally proud of her lover's horse, and his affection. "Where shall he go to, ma'am?"

"Is my writing desk with those cloaks?" asked Mrs. Denham.

"Yes, ma'am," cried Molly rising to bring it.

It was now that Mrs. Denham was to reap the advantage of her long habit of self-control. To move was torture, yet she smothered the groans which she could not quite suppress, and steadied one hand with the other, whilst she wrote a few lines.

"There—let him take that to Captain Trevor's at Ivy Cottage, as fast as he can; say nothing to any body here, and give it into the hands of one of the family. If they arrive before I die, he shall have twenty guineas for his trouble."

"Oh, mercy! that will set us up in a house," cried the simple Molly joyfully. "I hear Phill whistling in the yard: so I will slip down the back stairs and then nobody will see me."

"Go; but make haste back, for there is more to be done, and your aunt may return," cried Mrs. Denham impatiently.

The girl gave a knowing nod and departed.

Within ten minutes she was again by the side of the dying woman—her eyes glistening with delight.

"He is off, ma'am—he was on his horse, so there is no time lost; and he bade me tell you, with his duty, that he would win the twenty guineas to a sartainty."

"Good girl! now do further as I say; and you shall have another twenty guineas for yourself; but if you betray me—the curse of the dying will rest upon you. Take this packet—hide it—let no one here see it; but if I die before my friends arrive, give it yourself to Captain Trevor, or Mr. Philips of the Mount, as I have directed; and you shall receive what I promised. May I trust you?"

"That you may, ma'am; for I thinks of my own poor dying mother, and can't abide to see you cheated."

"You are a good girl; and God will reward you! Now put back the case under the cloaks, just as it was before, so that no one may sus-

pect its having been moved," said Mrs. Denham, relocking it with a key attached to her watch chain, which she replaced on a chair by the bed as before. "Stay in the room as much as possible, but say nothing kind to me, or of me, lest it awaken suspicion; and do you pour out my medicine and give it to me if you can. Be prudent—be secret, girl, and pray that I may live till my friends arrive; longer than that I dare not hope for life. I will now try to sleep, and let none know that I have been awake."

"Who comes here?" exclaimed Michael Trevor, as he stood in the porch at Ivy Cottage with his father, Mr. Philips, Mr. Woolley's executor, and Rosalind. "He should come on an errand of war or love by his furious riding."

"Pray heaven that he come not on a sadder errand than either," observed Rosalind quickly, her thoughts recurring to Mrs. Denham, and her melancholy presentiments.

"Are you Captain Trevor?" enquired the

horseman reining up his smoking steed with a strong and dexterous hand.

"I am. What is your business with me?"

"To give you this paper, sir, and beg you to come with all speed to the Red Lion at Hinckley, for the dying lady is hardly dealt by," replied the messenger, placing a paper in Captain Trevor's hand, who turned very pale on reading it.

Rosalind was by her father's side in an instant, and ere he guessed her purpose she too had perused the hurried, and scarcely legible lines.

"What is the matter?" asked Mr. Philips. "Who is dying at Hinckley?"

"Mrs. Denham; and she entreats us to go to her instantly, if we would see her alive; adding something about being in Cottrell's power, which I do not comprehend."

"Is Mr. Cottrell in the same house?" asked Rosalind of Phill Harris, for it was he who had ridden with all possible speed to secure the twenty guineas.

"Yes, ma'am, and orders all things just as he likes; and Molly bade me say cheated the poor lady, promising to send for her friends, which he does not intend to do. But you must be off directly, or she will not live till you get there."

"Fly! fly to save her! since he is there, her life is not safe," exclaimed Rosalind wildly, wringing her hands.

"Have you good reason for what you say?" questioned her father, to whom she had not revealed her worst suspicions of Edred Cottrell.

"He would stop at nothing—not even murder to gain his ends; and Mrs. Denham's present will is in his favor."

"Then not an instant must be lost; I will take your horse, Michael, and gallop across the country. Do you follow with your mother and Rosalind, for she desires to see both."

"I will ride with you," said Mr. Philips; "my presence as a magistrate and friend may be of use."

"I will take the ladies in my chaise to B.; and if you order out four horses as you pass through they will be little later than yourselves," said Mr. Burley, Woolley's executor, who was on the point of returning to B., having concluded the business on which he had come, and overheard the preceding conversation.

"Do so. Thank you, Burley," cried Captain Trevor, springing on his son's horse, that stood ready saddled for its young master's use, and setting spurs to its sides, calling back as he passed through the gate—"Break it gently to your mother."

"Let me have your servant's horse, Philips; and I will go with you, since Burley will take care of my mother," cried Michael.

"Ay do," answered Mr. Philips as he galloped after Captain Trevor.

To break the matter gently to Mrs. Trevor, or even to soften the account of her friend's danger, was out of the question, for, attracted

by the furious galloping of the messenger, and the loud talking which succeeded, she already knew the truth.

The shock was great; but the hope of seeing Mrs. Denham once more alive enabled her for the time to master her emotion, and she and Rosalind were on their way to Hinckley within a few minutes after the departure of the gentlemen.

CHAPTER XI.

"How is my patient? Oh! sleeping — all right! the wonderful effects of skill! Let her sleep on — I will call in again," said Mr. Thomson, re-entering Mrs. Denham's room at the expiration of some hours.

"Any chance of recovery?" asked Edred Cottrell, with affectionate interest of the sententious apothecary.

"Can scarcely say—thought not before; but the draught has done wonders—send another."

"Do, by all means; I consider my relative particularly fortunate in finding such skill in this poor village."

"Much flattered, sir; hope she may recover; but the merest trifle in her precarious state may yet prove fatal. Good morning, sir. Must attend to poor patients as well as rich."

"There are some people down stairs enquiring for you, Mrs. Hudson. You had better go to them, and I will watch by my cousin in the meantime, and call you should she wake," said Edred Cottrell, later in the afternoon. "You may go too, Molly," he said, seeing that the girl did not move.

"Molly muttered something about better stay, she might be wanted; but in obedience to a call from her aunt, and an order from Cottrell, she at length quitted the apartment, though with evident reluctance.

No sooner had they gone than Edred, approaching the bed, bent anxiously over the sufferer. Her breathing convinced him that

she slept; and he turned away with a satisfied air, moving about the room with a noiseless, cat-like motion.

Putting aside the cloaks that lay across the trunk, he discovered the writing case; and his eye gleamed with triumph at the sight. Mrs. Denham had intended to lock it, but her trembling hand had performed its office ill, and it opened at his touch. Every scrap of paper was carefully examined, then carefully replaced, whilst an exulting smile spoke his satisfaction at the result. There was money in the case, but he cared not for that—there was no sign of a fresh will, or any instructions for making one; and the only piece of writing in which he was named was an old—"Mem—Leave Edred Cottrell the plate and fixtures."

He looked an instant at the trunk, then replaced the cloaks and writing case, knowing that Mrs. Denham kept all her papers in the latter. He little thought that she was watching his movements, and rejoicing in his being foiled.

The second draught which was to be given to Mrs. Denham on her waking stood on a little table near the window. She saw him approach that table, examine the draught, pour it out, and add a few drops from a small bottle which he took from his waistcoat pocket. His hand shook as he dropped the drops, but his face was turned, so that she could not mark its expression. The phial was replaced in the pocket, and after the lapse of a few minutes, Edred crossed the room towards the bed, not with his former stealthy step, but with a bold, firm tread, as if he no longer cared for disturbing the rest of the sleeper.

For a time Mrs. Denham moved not, till the intensity of her agony forced from her a feeble groan, and a clutching of the bed-clothes.

It was enough for the watchful Edred:—the next moment he stood beside her, with the draught in his hand, and words of affection on his lips.

"You are better, my dear Mrs. Denham,

and I am rejoiced to see it. Your doctor says his draught has done wonders; and he has sent another to be taken immediately on your awakening, which is to work still greater marvels."

Mrs. Denham looking steadily on him, saw, or fancied she saw, a slight confusion.

"I am too ill to take it now; put it aside for a few minutes," she replied, speaking slowly and painfully.

"It will relieve your pain," he remarked, with soothing gentleness, holding it towards her.

"I have no doubt it will—put it here; and I can take it presently," she murmured. "But my lips are parched—let me first have some tea."

"You had better take the tea afterwards."

"No; I will have it first," persisted the sufferer.

Edred hesitated; then ringing the bell, ordered the tea, and set down the glass by the bed as she had desired.

"Are the Trevors come?" asked Mrs. Denham, speaking as if to Edred, but glancing at Molly, who brought the tea.

"No, ma'am; nobody is come as yet; but I dare say they will be here very soon now, for it is getting near six," said Molly, taking it upon herself to reply. "You had better drink the tea at once, ma'am, for I may be wanted below," she added, significantly, as the clatter of horses' hoofs coming up the village street at a great pace struck on her eager ear.

Mrs. Denham, taking the cup, told the girl that she might go.

Molly glanced from the window as she put back a chair, then across to Mrs. Denham with a joyful look ere she passed out of the room. "Did you send for the Trevors as you promised?" asked Mrs. Denham, looking keenly at Edred, by whom Molly's manœuvre had been unobserved.

"As soon as I could find a messenger; but the Trevors are not people to hurry themselves;

I dare say they will be here by and bye. I would have sent for Doctor Sykes from R—, but he is lying dangerously ill himself, I hear; a circumstance the less to be regretted, as all speak so highly of Mr. Thomson's skill. You had better take his second draught at once, my dear madam."

"Give it to me."

"Shall I hold it to your lips, my dear Mrs. Denham?"

"No, Edred Cottrell; your hand shakes more than mine; but mine is the shaking of pain, and yours of guilt," she replied, speaking her thoughts out boldly, for she had caught the sound of Captain Trevor's voice in the passage, and knew that she was no longer helpless.

"Guilt!" repeated Edred, cowering beneath her gaze,

"Yes, guilt! Edred Cottrell. You have lied to a dying woman, and there is no more peace for you on earth. You have not sent for my friends as you say, for your thoughts and

your deeds are evil, and will not bear the scrutiny of honest hearts. You sought among my private papers—but in vain. There is a will, but it is in safe hands ;—there is a will—and the name of Edred Cottrell is not in it."

"Where is it? Give it me?" cried Edred fiercely, grasping her arm with one hand, whilst the other was extended towards her throat.

"Would you murder me?" she asked with the same steady gaze, though unable to suppress a shudder at the fearful expression of his countenance.

He answered not; but the white teeth pressed on the livid lip till the blood sprang beneath the pressure, and the very nostrils grew of a grizzly shade whilst his eyes gleamed and glistened like two burning coals. The one hand drew nearer to the throat—the fingers closing and unclosing as it approached—whilst the grasp of the other became so rude, that a loud cry of pain broke from the sufferer.

"Be still! Give up the paper or you die,"

said Edred in a whisper, that sounded in the ears of the dying woman like the hissing of a thousand deadly serpents.

It was too late—his rule was past. The door was burst open at the moment, notwithstanding the struggles of the landlady, and Captain Trevor, springing towards the bed, tore Edred from his screaming victim with a force that dashed him against the wall, and for the instant stunned and stupified him.

"We are too late! she is dead," exclaimed Michael, who had followed close on his father, gazing with awe and grief on the fainting woman.

"Not yet dead—but dying; give me brandy—a cordial", gasped Mrs. Denham, exhausted by pain and the late excitement, yet still clear in her intellect—strong in her purpose. "Any thing but this—keep this—pointing to the glass which Edred had pressed upon her.

Michael took the glass as she desired, and the kind hearted Molly brought the brandy, the landlady having slunk away.

"What means this violence, Captain Trevor? I insist on explanation—satisfaction," exclaimed Edred Cottrell, foaming with rage.

"I should ask that of you. Do honourable men grasp helpless, suffering women as blacksmiths handle iron?" replied Captain Trevor contemptuously.

"You shall hear more of this," cried Edred, stalking across the room with the lower of revenge upon his brow.

"Stop him!" exclaimed Mrs. Denham roused by the dispute, and revived by the brandy and water. "He sought for my last will—he shall have its contents."

The contest with the landlady in the passage who had opposed the entrance of Captain Trevor and his companions, had excited the curiosity of the many loiterers about the inn, and several persons had forced their way into the dying woman's room.

Edred in consequence found such a phalanx of foes opposed to his exit, and prepared to

obey Mrs. Denham's mandate that he deemed it most prudent to remain where he was.

"You are too weak to bear further exertion yet awhile," said Captain Trevor, shocked at her ghastly appearance.

"What is to be done must be done quickly," she answered, writhing with pain as she spoke. "Rosalind and her mother—are they coming? —life ebbs apace."

"I expect them every instant; wait till they come, my dear madam."

"No waiting—I must work whilst God gives me strength, or how shall I hope that he will grant my prayer to die in her arms. Give me the packet, Molly. Good people, I will thank you all to listen and bear witness that this is my last will; and that I am of sound mind, and a clear intellect. You, Mr. Philips, with your friend and butler were yesterday witnesses to my signature;—will you now read the contents aloud to those assembled that there may be no dispute hereafter? I know

the wily wickedness of Edred Cottrell, and will thwart him."

Mr. Philips read as desired, only interrupted by the moans of the sufferer, which she could not entirely suppress, though she buried her face in the pillow.

The will was short, but clear and comprehensive—not technical of course, yet not to be misunderstood. It was only a provisional will till her solicitor could complete that for which she had sent him directions: yet it was a transcript of the clear, strong mind of the writer.

Mrs. Denham began by revoking all former wills, and then proceeded to bequeath her property as follows:—

A thousand pounds as a remembrance to Mrs. Sewell—the same sum to Michael Trevor, and Anne Weston; some pensions to servants and dependants—complimentary rings and legacies to friends and relations—twenty thousand pounds to Rosalind Trevor—twenty thou-

sand to Rupert Wyvill; Denham Park and all her other property to Captain and Mrs. Trevor for their lives, to descend at their death to Rosalind; and in case of her dying unmarried to go to Rupert Wyvill.

"Such is my last will and testament, and you are all witnesses," said Mrs. Denham as Mr. Philips concluded. "A letter is now on its way to my solicitor bidding him destroy my former will, and draw up a new one according to what you have just heard read; but for this last there is no time, so my will must stand as drawn up by myself. You are all witnesses."

"We are," cried all.

"I thank you! and now you may go."

Good feeling prompted the crowd to obey, and the room was cleared of all strangers but Molly.

"Captain Trevor, I rely on your giving twenty guineas to the messenger who called you hither; and twenty more to that good girl who sent him," pointing to Molly. "But for

her I had been the victim of that wretch; and a liar, a hypocrite, and would be murderer, would have inherited the home of my fathers."

"I will double the sum," exclaimed Captain Trevor; "she deserves it all."

"And she shall have something from me too," said Mr. Philips giving Molly a friendly slap on the shoulder.

"All this is the mere raving of a dying woman who knows not what she says in her delirium," exclaimed Edred Cottrell, striving to master his rage.

"The will was signed yesterday, when she was in perfect health, though with a dread of evil," observed Mr. Philips drily. "As for her charges against you—those are your concern."

"They are false! false as the foul fiend!" exclaimed Edred in passion, the white foam curling on his lips as he spoke. "She is delirious—she has not been herself since the accident; I can bring witnesses of that."

"I am not delirious, Edred Cottrell; and you know it. My charges are true; and you feel that they are," said Mrs. Denham, extending her arm towards him, and speaking with stern solemnity. "If you would clear yourself from the charge of seeking to hasten the work of death, drink the contents of that glass, which you pressed so strongly upon me."

The would be murderer quailed beneath her eye—his strong frame shook—a cold perspiration rose on his forehead, and his pallid features worked convulsively.

"Give it me!" he said in a hoarse whisper after a fearful silence, during which all present held their breath.

He took the draught from Michael's hand—but it never touched his lips; before any one guessed his purpose the glass was dashed through the open window, and fell in a hundred pieces on the stones below.

"Villain! then you did mean her death,', exclaimed Captain Trevor, seizing him by the

arm, whilst Michael and Mr. Philips crowded round him.

"Quit your hold! Where is the proof?" cried Edred triumphantly. "Who will credit the ravings of delirium?"

"There is proof on your person—I slept not as you thought," said Mrs. Denham. "But let him go!" she added, addressing her friends. "He is now too well known to do more harm, and the dying should not seek revenge, I forgive as I hope to be forgiven."

Captain Trevor loosened his grasp at her desire, and Edred Cottrell stalked from the room, giving back scowl for scowl, and shaking his hand in a menacing attitude towards the bed as he passed out.

"Who is this coming so swiftly?" questioned Mrs. Trevor of her daughter, as they were rapidly nearing Hinckley.

"Edred Cottrell," answered Rosalind.

"I fear he brings ill news," faltered Mrs. Trevor, who was in a state of painful excite-

ment; from her great anxiety for her old friend.

"He will bring us no good news; depend on that," said her daughter.

As Edred approached, he appeared undecided as to which side he should take; but finally, bidding the postilions stop, he rode up to the one where sat Mrs. Trevor, and reining up his horse abruptly leant in at the window.

"I am very sorry, my dear madam, to be the bearer of mournful tidings; but I come at your husband's request. All is over! and he begs you will return to Ivy Cottage immediately, as there is no accommodation for you at Hinckley."

"Not dead? Tell me not that!" cried Mrs. Trevor fixing a supplicating gaze on his face.

"Yes, dead—quite dead!" he replied in a hollow voice.

Mrs. Trevor sank back with a deep groan.

"Turn; and drive back to Ivy Cottage as fast as you can," cried Edred authoritatively to the postilions. "I grieve for you, Mrs. Trevor;

but must return to Hinckley. Good morning," and bowing to Rosalind and her mother, he retraced his steps at a full gallop.

"Go on to Hinckley," said Rosalind to the post boys, speaking as authoritatively as Edred himself had done. "Drive as fast as you can; and you shall be well rewarded."

Crack went the whips, and on rolled the carriage towards the Red Lion, as swiftly as four stout posters could bear it.

"Yes—you are right; I should like to look upon her once again, even as she is," gasped Mrs. Trevor.

"My dear mother, compose yourself;—she is not dead; I caught Edred's look as he rode off. He has been foiled, and this is his last scheme of revenge—I know him well," said Rosalind soothingly.

"Will they never come? Shall I not see them ere I die?" asked Mrs. Denham in feeble accents, recovering from a fainting fit, the effect of over exertion, and only partially revived by

the cordial administered, her whole frame quivering with the tortures she endured.

"I expect them every moment," replied Captain Trevor, whiping her damp brow with a woman's gentleness, whilst Mr. Philips turned and dashed away a tear, wrung from him by her agonizing moans.

"Every moment may be my last; I only pray to see them once again," murmured the sufferer. "And God grants my prayer," she exclaimed. "They come—and I am blest!"

A carriage drove furiously up to the door; and in a few moments Rosalind entered the room, followed by her mother leaning on Michael.

"Thank God! He has been merciful! Now I die happy," exclaimed the sufferer, starting up, and throwing an arm round the neck of each as they knelt beside the bed.

An hour after, and those who looked up from the street saw that the shutters of the room were closed, and the pious clergyman, who had

attended the sufferer at her express desire, quitted the house, a mingled expression of hope and sadness might be traced on his placid features. A soul had left this earth, and gone up for final judgment; but as he hoped, in peace with man, in humble faith towards its Maker and Redeemer.

The shock was great to all. Even Mr. Philips uttered no jest for a week, and Mrs. Trevor's life was despaired of for many hours. Edred had worked much ill; but not all he had intended.

"What is wealth? give me back my friend," was Mrs. Trevor's reply to a wordly minded consoler. And thus felt all the party; even Michael regretted her death; and rejoiced in his sister's splendid prospects without one feeling of envy.

How could he envy Rosalind when she had given him all she had; and was ready to share with him all that she might hereafter possess.

Time softens sorrow, and Mrs. Trevor had

too many blessings left to murmur at the will of Heaven. She had been reconciled to her early friend, who had died with her name upon her lips; and it was sinful to repine. Strength came again as she breathed the balmy air of a healthful summer, and her quiet smiles grew every day more joyous, and less rare. Two months had passed since her friend's death, yet she had not visited Denham; but in compliance with her husband's earnest entreaties, an early day was fixed for their leaving Ivy Cottage.

"Change of air will be of service to you, and Rosalind also, I hope, for I do not like her looks; she is thin, pale, and restless, or sunk in reverie," observed Captain Trevor with a father's anxiety.

"She is looking ill, dear girl; she has persisted in remaining too much in my sick room, and she is coming in now I see, though she has been out so short a time. Michael can never coak her to take a long walk as she used to do."

"Your mother would rather have your room than your company, and desires that you will stay out another hour," said Captain Trevor, leaning from the window. "Carry her off, Michael."

"Poor me; never was any one so tyrannised over by father, mother, and brother," said Rosalind as Michael twining her arm within his, marched her off.

"Advertise for a husband, sweet sister, to free you from our despotism."

"The remedy might be worst than the disease," answered Rosalind with a blush.

"That is for your decision. But come along, we will have a three mile walk, first on this nice green terrace, that overlooks half the county and then—But bless me! who is this riding so furiously over hedge and ditch, corn and turnips? It must be a sailor, or a beggar. No—it is Wyvill. Surely it is Wyvill! whom we have all given up for lost, he having vouchsafed no answer to my letter announcing his

legacy. He must forget that it is not hunting season, and think he is following the hounds. Why he is going to take that high hedge and ditch, and is making for the terrace, waving his hand as if wafting a salute to his lady love. Stand back, Rosalind; or he will be upon us. Such a leap and scramble! There is not another man in the county who would have done such a thing. Wyvill, my fine fellow, are you mad? or racing after the philosopher's stone?"

"I am seeking happiness," answered Rupert, springing from his panting steed, and addressing Rosalind with an ardour that needed no interpretation.

"Whew! sits the wind that way? I shall not be missed if I take myself off, I suspect; and I may as well look after Philips's horse, for that mad lover will never bestow a thought on him or me either. So this comes of cut and come again. I shall write a novel, entitled not 'Cut and Run,' but 'Cut and

Love.' I never suspected Rosalind of being cupid's slave, but the most prudent and most confident are caught at last; and really my sister Rosalind is not only a loving, but a very loveable body too, with all her high spirit. I do believe that she loves every thing in nature, even the very trees and flowers; and above all, the glorious sunshine."

Michael was quite right—Rupert thought only of Rosalind; and neither her brother nor his friend's horse ever came into his mind.

"Rupert Wyvill, there are great and heavy charges against you," began Michael Trevor, with mock solemnity, approaching the bower, where sat the lovers some three hours after. Seven farmers have warrants out against you for having destroyed their crops by your furious riding—Philips is raising the *posse comitatus* to recover his horse—my father and mother are in a ravenous rage; and, worst of all, the cook is in a perfect frenzy at having her dinner spoilt by the delay of an hour."

"I beg your pardon; I had no idea that it was so late," exclaimed Wyvill, starting up. "Where is the horse?"

"Stolen by gipsies, most probably. When a friend lends me a horse, I ride it soberly, and have it well taken care of," answered Michael gravely.

"The horse is safe in the stable, rest assured," said Rosalind, interfering in her lover's favour.

"Your evidence goes for nothing, since you are to be tried as an accomplice, Miss Rosa; and your mother says there is no reason in you. One day you will not go out—and the next you will not come in:—one moment you are as white as a ghost, and the next as red as a turkey rag. But come in to dinner; for I expect every moment to see the cook rushing towards us armed with ladle and gridiron. And you must be hungry too; for not even love can live upon roses—can it Rosalind?"

"I do not know anything about it," replied

his blushing sister, looking down as she took Rupert's proffered arm.

"Is that all you can say? Any simpleton might have said as much. How have you managed to tame her down to such humility, Wyvill? You two used to have monstrous keen encounters."

"We intend to conclude, like most belligerents, by entering into a close alliance," answered Wyvill with spirit.

"Ha! ha! 'La belle Alliance.' I shall play herald and proclaim it. But pray may I ask is this treaty of alliance made after the common fashion, of the weakest yielding her rights to the strongest? I ask because Rosalind expressed a great horror of tyranny this morning."

"There has not been—there never can be a question of rights between us. I have given myself and all I have to your sister."

"Ah! that is a proper, loverlike phrase. Do not you believe him Rose, he will have

himself and all back again; and you and yours into the bargain, as soon as you have uttered the fatal—yes. That is always the way with us men; but you can talk about that in the dining-room, for I am most unsentimentally hungry, and there is my father looking half famished, and wholly carnivorous. I will see if I cannot get up a fight between you two in the evening."

"You had better be quiet, or we shall unite our forces against you," said Rupert, looking trustingly at Rosalind.

"Then I had better be quiet, as you say. But why did not you answer my letter by post, or in person before?"

"Because from my having passed over into Norway, your letter and Mrs. Denham's reached me only yesterday. Need I say that I travelled all night?"

"Poor fellow! Well, then, I will introduce you to my father and mother, with a fine flourish about your having saved Rosalind's

life without a fee or reward, and all that sort of thing. Not that you deserve any forbearance, you wild bramble, for keeping all this a secret from your brother," he whispered to Rosalind.

> "I do not rhyme to that dull elf
> Who cannot picture to himself."

That Wyvill's reception from Captain and Mrs. Trevor was as cordial as he could desire; and that he found little difficulty in persuading Rosalind to promise him her hand, on the expiration of her six month's mourning for Mrs. Denham.

If any would inquire how many lovers' quarrels took place within that period, we can only reply, that the lovers themselves deny even one. Both had felt the bitterness of doubt and estrangement, and both had a fancy that every quarrel, or even disagreement, robs affection of some of its bloom; if not of its worth. In one thing Rosalind was disingenuous; she did not like to admit that she had

ever quarrelled with Wyvill's smile, which she now maintained was the most beautiful thing in the world's whole range—so sweet, and yet so full of the mind's mastery.

But little more remains to be told. The receipt for the payment of the two thousand pounds was found among Mr. Woolley's papers, and Mr. Henry Harper defeated. The evidence adduced against Cottrell, Stebbing, and Todd, at the next assizes, for a conspiracy to defraud and injure Rupert Wyvill, was too strong to be controverted, or even doubted; indeed, none but the latter attempted a defence, for Cottrell quitted England immediately after Mrs. Denham's death, to seek his fortune in a foreign land, under a new name—let us hope by better means.

Stebbing being seized with a dangerous illness whilst waiting in prison till his sentence of transportation for life, on account of a daring burglary, could be carried into effect, revealed

the arts by which Edred had worked on his love of money, and wish for revenge, till he had wrought him to his purpose; so that not the faintest shadow of suspicion could, for the future, rest on Wyvill's honor; and Rosalind had the pleasure of hearing from her former station in the gallery a second jury virtually revoke the verdict of the first. Nay she even shook hands with Mr. Drew some days after the trial, and forgave the mischief lurking in his little snake like eyes, he having been engaged, according to former promise, to assist young Hardy with his experience in conducting the case.

"I hope you are better satisfied with my second speech than my first," said Mr. Drew twinkling his little eyes with great self complacency.

"Much better, Mr. Drew," replied Rupert, frankly; "but if I might be permitted to make such an observation to a learned barrister, I

should add, that had you said less before, you would have had less to unsay now. I had to blush as much for your praise to-day, as for your abuse last year."

"Ah! my dear sir, you do not comprehend the common herd. A *soupçon* of rouge is not enough for the vulgar—you must lay it on thick to attract their attention. The peony is not a delicate blush like Miss Trevor's peachy bloom, but a deep carmine. Then really my heart was a little in the matter to day, for I felt that I had formerly done you wrong, and you bore that wrong well. I will help on your friend Hardy, as I said, to make up for it: he is a rising young man—not quite in my style, perhaps, more sentimental—more lofty; for I have nothing poetical about me, and work for money."

Mr. Drew kept his word, and young Hardy had reason to remember his first cause with pleasure, though at the time it had only brought

him shame and sorrow. Once put in the way to fortune, his abilities and perseverance ensured success.

A company was purchased for Michael, who looked so handsome in his Captain's uniform, that Miss Verrender relented in his favor, only so far following the advice of her friends as to have the whole of her fortune settled on herself. Thus Michael married his heiress; but not with her hand did he win happiness. Jealous, narrow-minded, and shrewish, he had no cause to rejoice in this wished for union:—nothing but his careless good temper could have enabled him to endure her caprice and ill-humour with any tolerable degree of patience; and as it was, he could not but sigh when he contrasted his own fire-side with that of Rupert and Rosalind:—at theirs was affection and confidence—at his distrust and dispute. He had none of the nobler elements of mind within him, but his affection for his sister remained

unchanged to his dying day — the brightest trait in his character—and Rosalind willingly blinding herself to his faults, since she could not amend them, was ever ready to share his joys or vexations; and to her he would fly for comfort, when fretted beyond endurance by his richly dowered, but shrewish wife.

Young Lennard returned to England at the end of three years to claim Rosalind's promised friendship—but not alone: he brought Anne Weston with him as his bride, and their mutual greetings were so cordial, yet so unembarrassed, that Rosalind felt her last and only source of regret was removed: she had not blighted the happiness of one who had so generously aided those she loved. He had told his sorrows to the sympathising Anne till, won by her pity, he began to think her as charming as the damsel whose cruelty he so much deplored, whilst Anne, in her turn, thought Rosalind very simple for preferring

Rupert Wyvill to George Lennard. This was all as it should be—all as Rosalind wished; and the only point of dispute between the two friends and cousins was as to the merits of their respective husbands, each, like a good wife, maintaining the superiority of her own.

The Darleys were well provided for; and the little girl, Rupert's protegée, as Rosalind called her, was put to school, aud carefully watched over by the residents at Denham Park.

Mrs. Hudson drank herself to death within the year, whilst Phill Harris and his Molly rented a farm of the Trevors, who kindly helped to stock it; and as the story-books say, "they lived very happy ever after."

Mrs. Sewell was in raptures at Rosalind's becoming Mrs. Denham's heiress after all; and always persisted that it was solely owing to her advice, and endeavours, &c. &c.; finding out, as may be imagined, some most singular coin-

cidences touching this much desired event; nay, she even disputed with Mr. Adnam the merit of making up the match between her and Rupert, whilst Mr. and Mrs. Wyvill were somewhat obstinate in maintaining in thought, if not in words, that their union had been a matter of their own free choice, rather retarded than hastened by the instrumentality of others.

THE END.

T. C. Newby, Printer, Angel Hill, Bury.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA
3 0112 084217022